

HOW GREAT THOU ART

By Milton Smith

It was Stuart K. Hine who wrote the beloved hymn that I have chosen to use as the title of this article. How many times over the years have Christians joined their voices and hearts together and sung the words of this moving song? Of special note would be that much-loved chorus:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee:

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

As we contemplate the universe around us, it is nearly impossible to honestly doubt the existence of such a Supreme Being. But if we want to really learn about God, we must go to His inspired Word. Why? Because it takes inspiration from God to mankind for us

to even begin to contemplate His majesty.

For example, we learn from the Bible that God is Sovereign. Simply stated, God is the supreme ruler, independent of any authority outside of Himself. We do not learn this fact by observing His creation, but by reading His inspired Word. We might assume that God is powerful without inspiration, but by reading the Bible we learn that He is all-powerful (omnipotent). If we seriously consider the vastness of the universe, we might be forced to conclude that God is not limited like we are, but it takes revelation from God to learn that He is omnipresent (everywhere at once) and that He possesses infinite under-

standing (omniscience). Ancient civilizations, without the Bible in hand, often concluded that their so-called “gods” might be malevolent, cruel beings demanding such horrible things as human sacrifices. It is only when we read the Bible that we learn that the true God is a being of mercy and grace, loving man so much, He gave His Son to die for our sins. These facts are only learned from the pages of the Bible.

When we consider how much God loves us and how He was willing to give His Son on a cross to redeem us from the curse of sin, it is then that we want to truly raise our voices in unison and sing from our hearts, “How Great Thou Art!” — Bixby, OK

SOWING THE WIND AND REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

By Danny Tunnell

“For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. . .” (Hosea 8:7.) “He that troubles his own house shall inherit the wind.” (Proverbs 11:29.) “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Galatians 6:7-8.)

At the risk of sounding indelicate or insensitive, we know these verses are true. We know it by observation and by personal experience.

In America, abortion is not only legal, but it has become acceptable. Pornography has become a billion dollar industry. Colleges have become places where some go to binge-drink.

We have sown the wind,

and we are now reaping the whirlwind. Venereal disease is widespread. Some have gotten AIDS through drug use or sexual activity. Some get emphysema or lung cancer by smoking. Some fetal damage is caused by a mother’s use of alcohol or drugs. And some are involved in car accidents that are caused by alcohol or drug use.

In America two-thirds of deaths prior to the age of 65 can be traced to lifestyle choices according to the Carter Center in Atlanta.

Two states may help to explain God’s law on sowing and reaping: Nevada and Utah. This is not intended to offend the good people in either state, and there are good people in both states.

According to morality tables, Nevada ranks as our worst state. Utah ranks as our best. In many

ways the two states are very similar. The people in both states are relatively wealthy and well educated. The climate in both states is very similar.

How can we explain the mortality difference? Utah has a very high Mormon population that frowns on using tobacco alcohol, and caffeine. People in Nevada have a high divorce rate, and a high rate of tobacco and alcohol use, plus the stress associated with gambling. Of course, in recent times, gambling has become a nation-wide problem.

Would it be appropriate to say, “As an individual, or a state, or as a nation, God’s law is true: we do reap what we have sown?”

— Miami, OK

Old Paths

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

OUR KING IS COMING

by Bobby Key

While our Lord was yet among men, He promised, “I will come again.” Though many centuries have come and gone, this promise still echoes through the ages bringing comfort to the suffering saints. “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28.) Over three hundred times in the New Testament our Lord makes the promise: “I will come again.”

Yes, our King is coming - not to be crowned and begin His reign, but rather, to end His reign and receive His own unto Himself! Let us notice some of the characteristics of His coming.

It will be majestic. “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.” (Matthew 25:31.)

It will be sudden. “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes.” (Matthew 25:13.) “Therefore be you also ready; for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.” (Matthew 22:44.)

It will be the end of preparation. “And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:32.) “These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal.” (Matthew 25:46.)

It will be the beginning of supreme joy for some. “Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matthew 25:34.)

It will be the beginning of great sorrow for others. “Then shall He say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41.)

— Miami, OK

BREAKING THE ICE FOR BAPTISM

By Ron Stough

T. B. Larimore, noted gospel preacher from days gone by, wrote the following account of a baptism:

“Last night when we got to the water, we found that no one had cut the ice. Finally, after we had stood there from twenty to thirty minutes, they succeeded in beating with a long, heavy piece of timber, room through the ice for the baptizing. The lady who was to be baptized had on old, thin, leaky shoes; hence, of course, her feet were wet from walking and standing in the deep, sloppy mud. As I lowered her into the cold grave, the broken ice naturally closed over her, so that she was literally covered over; the grave filled with water. The mass of broken ice over her must have been many inches thick. As I raised her up, she said, ‘Oh! I’m so glad!’ Talking and praising God in a low, soft, sweet voice, she came up out of the water, pushing a great block of ice out of her way.”

How long has it been since you saw a person so anxious to be baptized? This kind of anticipation is what is characterized in the Scriptures. In Acts 8, the Ethiopian eunuch, after learning the truth from Philip asked, “What hinders me from being baptized?” (Vs. 36.) In Acts 16, the jailer didn’t wait for the morning to complete his obedience. Obviously, these men realized the importance of baptism in their spiritual wellbeing.

I am afraid that, in some instances, we have lost the urgency connected with baptism. Many in the religious world downplay its importance, and if we are not careful, we can be guilty of the same thing.

The Bible has not changed its emphasis on baptism. Acts 2:38 declares, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 22:16 emphasizes, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Let us never lose sight of the importance of baptism, and let us share that insight with our friends.

— Duncan, OK

BEING CONTENT

By Cecil Burch

There is a story of a king who was suffering from a painful ailment, whose astrologer told him that the only cure for him was to find a contented man, get his shirt, and wear it night and day. So messengers were sent throughout the king's realm in search of such a man, with orders to bring back his shirt. Months passed, and after a thorough search of the country the messengers returned, but without the shirt. "Did you find a contented man in all my realm?" The king asked. "Yes, O King, we found one, just one in all of your realm," they replied. "Then why did you not bring back his shirt?" The king demanded. "Master, the man had no shirt," came the reply.

I do not believe in the teachings of astrologers nor does it seem practical that the story above actually happened, but our King, Jesus Christ, who is reigning over His kingdom, the Church, said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on." (Matthew 6:25.) Paul advised Timothy about the merits of being content when he said, "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts." (1 Timothy 6:6-9.) He continues with this same subject and warns Timothy, "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10.)

The writer of the book of Hebrews explains that contentment is the result of fully trusting in God. He says, "Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5)

— Angel Fire, NM

Editorial . . .

RIGHTS IN THE WOMB

by Dalton Key

Read carefully the following words of inspired Scripture, remembering, "The word of the Lord is right." (Psalm 33:4.)

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well . . . Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they were all written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them." (Psalm 139:14,16.)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I set you apart." (Jeremiah 1:5, Godspeed.)

"You know not . . . how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a pregnant woman." (Ecclesiastes 11:5, Amplified Version.)

"From birth the Lord called me, he named me from my mother's womb . . . The Lord formed me in the womb." (Isaiah 49:1,5, NEB.)

The Bible's message is clear. Abortion concerns more than the mere removal of unwanted tissue; it concerns the termination of human life!

The most of mankind, until relatively recently, has been in agreement.

The Hippocratic Oath, the standard for medical ethics in the Western Hemisphere for centuries now, states clearly, "I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce an abortion."

The World Medical Association, in its Declaration of Geneva, affirmed, "I will maintain the utmost respect for life from the time of conception until death."

And as recently as 1970, an issue of California Medicine included the following statement: "It is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception and is continuous . . . until death."

And yet, in light of the foregoing facts, we, as a nation, are putting to death over one million unborn children each year. Multitudes of those of our offspring who might have become the best of us are summarily snuffed out and thrown away with no right to life, no hope for liberty, and no consideration for the pursuit of happiness.

Question: Whose rights are greater? The mother's to choose whether to let a baby live? Or the baby's to take its first breath?

(Thanks to those of you who help with the ongoing expenses related to printing and mailing this little paper. Your help is both needed and appreciated!)



THE CLEAR CASE FOR BAPTISM

By Dalton Key

Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16.)

The inspired apostle Peter, answering an anxious assembly on Pentecost Day, said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Scripture later reports, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized." (Acts 2:38,41.)

In his first epistle, Peter wrote simply, "Baptism does also now save us." (1 Peter 3:21, AV.)

Ananias, a disciple sent by God to speak to Saul of Tarsus, a man who as yet was not a Christian, said, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Several

years later, this same Saul, who by this time was known as Paul, taught, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." (1 Corinthians 12:13.)

The brethren at Rome were reminded, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4.)

The Christians of Galatia were instructed, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:26,27.)

Notice the clarity and continuity of New Testament teaching. Baptism is directly linked to salvation, remission and washing away of sins, entrance into the body of Christ, the new birth, and

the putting on of Christ.

For the 3000 obedient souls of Pentecost, remission of sins depended on it. For Saul of Tarsus, the washing away of sins depended on it. For the saints at Rome, becoming a new creation depended on it. For those living in the New Testament era and conversant with New Testament teaching, salvation without or apart from baptism was a concept completely foreign to faith or teaching.

Has anything since changed? Has heaven reversed itself in this matter?

I don't know about you, but when the question concerns my salvation, the answer I want to hear is the one coming from the Bible.

What do you think?

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

By Hershel Dyer

old:

"Pharaoh said to Jacob, 'How old are you?'" (Genesis 47:8.)

By all right and reason, Jacob's aged appearance at 130 years must have provoked Pharaoh's question. Yet the appearance and calendar age of a person are only two aspects of growing older. Why is it that some seem old at forty and others seem young at eighty?

In the letter to Philemon, Paul refers to himself as "aged." Although he was probably a little under sixty at that time, suffering and privation had taken their toll. Did this mean that he considered himself too old for service? After this he wrote some of his greatest epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, First and Second Timothy, etc. Evidence seems to indicate that he also went later to the west, perhaps Spain, and preached until his final arrest and imprisonment.

It has been said that a person is

When he loses his sense of humor. Woe be to the one who takes himself too seriously. All of us do and say foolish things. Blunders are not committed by a select few. If no real harm is done, laugh at yourself. If others laugh, laugh with them and remember that they are not immune to mistakes either!

When he loses the desire to learn. The mind or brain may remain very receptive of activity and flexibility when the body no longer moves at its youthful pace. Reading, listening and many mental exercises can keep the mind fresh and make a person both joyful and a joy to others. The slowdown of the body should not be a signal to slow down the mind.

When he considers himself worthless. It's a bad sign when someone says, "I'm no good to

anybody anymore." The fact that your children are grown or that your retirement from a job takes place is no reason to assume that the Lord and nobody else needs you now. — Tulsa

"They shall bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing." (Psalms 92:14.)

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Dalton Key Editor

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