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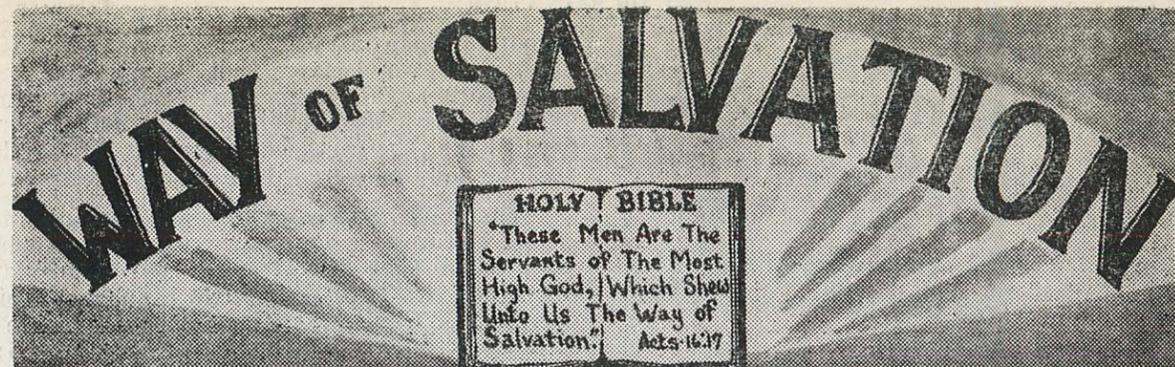
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# The Foundation Of The Church

By BILL CREWS

Eight centuries before Christ the prophet Isaiah wrote these words: "Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone of sure foundation." (Isa. 28:16). The church of Christ as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Timothy 3:15), a temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16), as God's spiritual habitation (Ephesians 2:19-22), must have a foundation. Upon what foundation was the church built?

Every time the prophecy of Isaiah is referred to in the New Testament it is applied to Christ (see Romans 9:55, 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6). In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 the inspired apostle Paul wrote: "According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ."

Many of you are familiar with the conversation recorded by the inspired apostle Matthew in Matthew 16:13-19. Jesus, while in the parts of Caesarea Philippi, asked his disciples who men said He was. After the answers, He asked who they said He was. The theme of the conversation is the identity of Jesus. Peter then confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the central fact of the Bible, the bedrock of Christianity, the truth that must be acknowledged and confessed by all who would become God's children (John 20:31; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32). Jesus then said, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father

who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou (second person singular) art Peter (Petros, the Greek word used by Matthew, is masculine in gender and means a rock, a piece of rock, a stone), and upon this (third person singular—not "upon thee") rock (petra, the Greek word here used by Matthew, is feminine in gender and means rock, a massive stone, as a great ledge) I will build my church."

Inspiration led Matthew to use two different Greek words for rock. In accord with all other passages concerning the foundation of the church, the reference in Matthew 16-18, declares the church to be built, not upon Peter, but upon the divinity of Christ, which divinity Peter confessed. So understood early Christians; so believed those men called "church fathers" of the centuries immediately following the first. The famous St. Augustine, in his second treatise on the first epistle of John, said: "What do the words mean, I will build my Church on this rock? On this faith, on that which said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In his treatise on John, Augustine said: "On this rock which thou hast confessed I will build my church, since Christ was the rock." Friends, the only passage connecting Peter with the foundation of the church, connects all the apostles and the prophets (Ephesians 2:20).

As a bride the Church has Christ as husband (Ephesians 5). As a body the church has Christ as head (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). As a kingdom the church has Christ as king (1 Timothy 6:15; Colossians 1:13). As a building the church has Christ as foundation.

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## THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."



PERVIE NICHOLS

### "Scripture"

The word "scripture," generally, means "anything written." However, it is more specifically applied to "The books of the Old and the New Testament, or of either of them; the Bible . . . A passage from the Bible; a text," and, in the plural, to "the Holy Scriptures." (Webster).

The Holy Scriptures are referred to in such Biblical terms as "truth" (Jno. 17:17), "seed" (Lk. 8:11), "the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16), "doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9), "a mirror" (Jas. 1:23), "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25), and "oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:11).

### Searching the Holy Scriptures (Acts 17:11)

To search is to examine for the purpose of finding something; to investigate; to seek by looking, inquiry. (Webster). Our purpose is to search or investigate the Holy Scriptures. Therein is revealed all we need to know about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, heaven, hell, our origin, our duty and eternal destiny.

### Scriptures Are Inspired

In the Holy Scriptures there are at least twenty-five hundred claims of inspiration. (See 1 Cor. 2:10; 1 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:21). If they are not inspired of God, they are the product of man. And if they are merely the work of man, they are the greatest fraud and deception ever forced upon man.

The scientific accuracy of the Scriptures is

proof of their inspiration. For example, in 712 B.C. a prophet declared that the earth is round. (Isa. 40:22). This was centuries before man made that scientific discovery. The Holy Scriptures revealed that the earth is suspended in space long before man discovered this. (Job 26:7; Heb. 1:3).

There are hundreds of examples to prove that the Scriptures are prophetically true. A prophecy in Joshua 6:26 was fulfilled 351 years later. (1 Kings 16:34-35). The birth, the place of birth and life of Christ were recorded long before He was born. (See Isa. 7:14; Isa. 53:55; Micah 5:2).

The harmony of the Bible is evidence of its inspiration. Its sixty-six books were written by about 40 men over a period of 1500 years. Those writers were scattered, yet when their writings were brought together the harmony was astounding! This would have been impossible without inspiration.

No other writings have the transforming power and influence claimed for the Holy Scriptures. The Bible has exerted an influence for good on every phase of our civilization. Evidence of its influence is on every hand.

The Holy Scriptures are indestructible. (Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). The history of the Bible is remarkable indeed! Throughout its existence it has been attacked by every class of men. But it still lives, and will continue to do so in spite of its enemies.

### Holy Scriptures Are Profitable

"For doctrine." (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 4:3-4). All true religious doctrine or teaching is found in the Holy Scriptures. If a doctrine is not scriptural it is not true. One reason for searching the Scriptures is to compare various religious teachings with the Scriptures and distinguish between truth and error. (Acts 17:11).

"For reproof." The Scriptures rebuke sin in all walks of life. (2 Tim. 4:1-3). No one can preach the Scriptures without reproving sinners and exposing error.

"For correction." The Scriptures set us right when we go wrong. All who are in error must be corrected by the Bible. To be correct one must conform to the Scriptures.

"For instruction in righteousness." The gospel of Christ provides us with instructions regarding every phase of life, including righteous living. (Tit. 2:11-12).

The Scriptures furnish us "completely unto every good work." There is no good work that is not authorized by the Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:16-17). They contain all the instructions man needs concerning his salvation, and how to live and worship God acceptably. (2 Pet. 1:21). Man's every step in the pathway of duty is authorized by the Scriptures. Therefore, the creeds, doctrines and traditions of men are wholly unnecessary. The Bible is truly the traveler's map and the pilgrim's staff.

Let us search the Holy Scriptures, and let them fill our memory, rule our heart, and guide our feet.

## Sermon Outline

IS IT . . . "THE" WAY OR "A" WAY?

(Isa. 35:1-8)

By FRANK INGRAM

### Introduction:

1. This is an age of travel. If one is to travel to a certain destination, as Montana, there are things he needs to know.

a. Is there a good road or way to Montana? Where is it? Where can one learn about it? Reach it?

b. Is there a New Jerusalem-Heaven? Do you want to go there? If so, let's inquire.

### Discussion:

I. IS THERE A WAY THAT LEADS TO HEAVEN? If not our efforts are in vain. Isaiah speaks of two ways—"Highway" and "Way" (Text).

A. Christ presents them in Mat. 7:13-14 and exhorts all in one way.

B. Isaiah says "IT" is the way of Holiness.

II. WHERE IS THE ROAD AND WHAT IT IT? Listen to Jesus in Jno. 14:1-6.

III. WHERE MAY I LEARN ABOUT IT? In the scriptures (Jno. 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15).

IV. HOW CAN I GET INTO CHRIST, THE WAY?

A. Must be drawn to Him (Jno. 6:44-45) How? by God's power (Rom. 1:16).

B. Man comes by hearing, learning and believing (Rom. 10:17; Mat 28:18-20).

C. Upon Believing, Must REPENT (Rom. 10:10; Acts 11:18).

D. One, then must get "into" Christ, the Way by (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27).

E. Only upon obedience to the above commands does God promise to bestow His Grace.

V. HAVING ENTERED THE WAY ONE MUST TRAVEL TO THE END (Rev. 2:10).

A. There are marks along the "Highway" of God to guide us.

B. Some signs are, Pray without ceasing, Forsake not the assembly, Let your light shine, work and worship, be faithful till death.

### Conclusion:

A. Are you in the Way that leads to heaven?

B. Have you entered and stopped short of the end?

C. Have you failed to heed the signs and are on the brink of destruction?

D. Why not begin today to live the CHRISTIAN LIFE.

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## IF CHILDREN

If you are of the opinion that your neighbor is entirely too wonderful a person to be lost just because she has never been baptized, and you find yourself determined to defend her against such a possibility, read again this bit of truth from the apostle Paul: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:16, 17).

"If children, then heirs." So says the apostle. This should leave no room for doubt. Only children of God are heirs of God. A person—whether it be mother, father, neighbor—is not an heir of God until that person has been born into the family of God. Much as we would like to believe that all good people are heirs of God, it just isn't true. Nor should we, in conversation with our neighbors, imply that they are safe just to avoid an unpleasant situation. There is no compromise with truth and the truth is quite obvious when we consider the language of the apostle.

Only penitent, baptized believers in Christ have been born into the family of God. Only such as have been born again can enter into His kingdom. (John 3:5). Such entrance into God's family allows that person to become an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus. All who refuse to be baptized into Christ will die without God and without hope in this world, regardless of how sympathetic toward them we may become. Don't help send your neighbor's soul to hell by allowing her to believe she is all right as long as she is honest. —Selected

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## FIRST THINGS FIRST

By GUS NICHOLS

There are things of first importance, things which come before all other things in this world. No one can do all the things being done by mankind upon the earth. A choice must be made. Since one can only do a very few things in this short life, we should strive to learn where to place the emphasis. We should learn what is best, what is of most importance, and seek to put first things first in our hearts and lives. He who fills his life with trivial things is headed toward failure and dismay.

### Church Before Other Things

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33). When the Lord promised to build His church, He spoke of the keys of it as "The keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 16:18-19). Had the kingdom not been in existence in the life-time of the Apostles, they would not have needed the keys of it. But before their death God had "Translated" them "Into the kingdom of His dear Son." (Col. 1:13). Before Pentecost (Acts 2), they were to pray for it to come, and had the promise that it would come in their life-time. (Mk. 9:1; 15:43; Matt. 6:9-12). But after Pentecost all Christians were in the kingdom. (Acts 2:47). It had come and been established upon the earth. Now it is to be placed before all other institutions. It should come first in our affections and purposes. "Seek ye first the kingdom." Seek its principles, and righteousness. Seek its benefits and blessings. Put it before food and raiment, and everything in this world. (Mat. 6). At every effort to exalt the Church of the Lord, some one wants to substitute man-made denomination for it, or some church built by man. Among all the organizations in the world, the kingdom, or church, must come first.

### Christ First Among Men

Christ is the "Son of man" as well as the "Son of the living God." (Mat. 16:16-18). He could, as it were, reach down and take humanity by the hand and say "I am the Son of man, for humanity was my mother"; then reach up and take God by the hand and says, "I am the Son of God, for God is my only Father." He is more than man, and when compared with man He is to ("In all things") have "The pre-eminence." (Col. 1:18). In authority and power, Christ comes first. (Matt. 28:18). He must come before kings and rulers of this earth, even before one's dearest relatives. (Mat. 10:35-37). He comes before "Moses and Elias," as was demonstrated on the Mount when God said "Hear ye Him." (Mat. 17:5). Some people are so foolish as to take the word of their preacher instead of the words of Christ. When there is a clash between Christ and any men, Christ must come first. He is to be "preeminent," or first, in all things.

### Soul Before the Body

Whether men believe it or not, the soul of man (and its needs) comes before the body, and its needs. The soul is of more value than "The whole world." (Mat. 16:26). The soul is the eternal structure, while the body is the scaffolding round about it. To put the body first is to put that which is temporal between us and that which is eternal. When her house caught on fire, a mother began to carry out quilts and pillows, and other things of like importance. Having rescued all she could, she stood in the dis-

tance to watch the roof cave in and crash, and heard the scream of her darling baby forgotten and ignored to perish in the devouring flames. She said, "Oh, my God, while I was rescuing trivial things, I have left my precious baby to be burned to death." Millions may thus cry out in the last great day concerning their souls. They have lived on earth like the beast of the fields—putting the body—the flesh and the lusts thereof—constantly before their eyes, and permitting it to blind them to all that is eternal. Hence, the soul is neglected and lost (II Cor. 4:16-18). The great apostle Paul said "I keep under my body." (I Cor. 9:27). In this way, the body is made to serve its true purpose. This is best for soul and body. Hence, put the soul first.

### Duty Before Pleasure

Duty must come before pleasure, even ahead of innocent pleasures. Strolling in a flower garden may be innocent pleasure, even may be profitable in some way. But if a car crashes into a light post and human beings are mangled, bruised and bleeding, and needing help, pleasure must give way to duty in such a case. Hence, the Christian life is our "Vocation"—and business. (Eph. 4:1-2). Other things are only our "avocation"—or sideline. It is an awful mistake to put pleasures ahead of our duty, and responsibility, as Christians. The duties of the citizen in the kingdom come first. (Matt. 6:33).

### Character Before Wealth

Character comes before money and wealth. "A good name is rather to be chosen than GREAT RICHES, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." (Prov. 22:1). We need to learn where to put the stress in life. If one does not have good character, he is indeed miserably poor. Many are making the mistake of putting material things first. They live for what they can get, rather than for what they can give. They think the world owes them a vast sum, and they do everything they do for the purpose of collecting what the world owes them. This motive makes them live like the brute. But Paul was a "Debtor"—in debt—to all men. (Rom. 1:14-16). This motive, like a magnet, lifted him above the common herd, and made him the great man that he was. Let us put character first. Other things matter little, any way.

### Bible Before Other Literature

The Bible should be our chief study and meditation. It should come before all other reading matter. Yet it is neglected by the masses. Why? Principally because it condemns the wickedness in the reader, who does not like to be bothered. The world is flooded with literature, much of it is false and damnable—gotten out by the enemy of our souls, though otherwise good people sometimes peddle it over the earth. A new crime wave is being announced in the papers and over radio. The cause is: the race has forgotten God, and forsaken the Bible. We must suffer until we return unto God, and put His word ahead of whatever is crowding it out of our lives. What the Bible says must come first. It is not to be prostituted and brought down to the level of man's word. The Bible is to be our only standard of moral conduct. To make conscience our guide is to put the Bible off to second place, or perhaps further down the line. People put their creeds ahead of the religious paper, and all sorts of books, magazines, and other trash ahead of the Bible. To put the kingdom first is to put all that is true and right first. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

## "He Shall Know of the Teaching"

By SAM BINKLEY

The question is frequently asked, How can a person know what is right in religion since there are so many conflicting doctrines taught in the world today? Many are perplexed over the situation, apparently, because they believe that only those who have special theological training have the right to interpret the Bible, and that since they have this special training they would not give the wrong interpretation. On the very surface one should be able to see that this is not a safe procedure since these theologians do not agree as to the plan for salvation given in the Bible. An investigation of the Bible on this thought will reveal that the Lord has so given his will to man that we can understand his will if we have the proper attitude of mind. For instance, Jesus said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." (Jno. 7:17).

Many religious leaders discourage the members from studying the Bible for themselves by telling them they must have an official interpreter before they can understand it. It is pathetic, indeed, that many believe this and do not study the Bible for themselves to see what the Lord teaches us to do to be saved. Not only has the Lord said that it is possible for man to know of the teaching, but he has commanded us to know his will. "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17).

### God's Will Is In The Bible

There was a time when God made known his will to man in oral form as he spoke directly to man. During the Patriarchial age God spoke to the fathers and during the Jewish dispensation he made his will known through Moses and the other prophets who lived during that period. God's plan to give to man the New Covenant (will) of Jesus Christ was to give it first of all orally and after that in written form.

Jesus diligently taught his apostles for about three years that they might know his will and, even then, when the time came for them to publicly proclaim this will they were not left to their own memory, but were miraculously guided by the Holy Spirit, that they might preach the complete will of Christ without mistake. (Jno. 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 20:20, 27; Jude 3).

We now have the complete will of God in written form in the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Cor. 13: 8-13). Therefore, to understand the Bible is to understand the will of God.

### God's Word Must Be Handled Aright

The Lord does not force his will upon us, neither does he remove the possibilities of our being deceived. But if we have the desire to learn and will study his word with an open mind he has promised that we "shall know of the teaching." Read 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 10:33; Acts 17:11. and see the importance placed upon having the proper attitude toward the Bible when we study it.

Many fail in their search for the truth of God's will because they allow such things as earthly ties, a desire for material things and prejudice to hinder them. A pro-

found and voluntary desire to do the will of God is the best preparation for a true knowledge of what the will of the Lord is.

### The Will of God Must Be Obeyed

It is not only necessary that we distinguish in our minds the difference in the will of God and the doctrines of men, but we must obey that will to be saved. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21). And the writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. (Heb. 5:8-9). And again, Jesus said that "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (Jno. 6:45). We conclude from these scriptures that one of the reasons there is so much confusion in the religious world today is that many do not have the earnest desire to know God's will that is so necessary to the understanding of it.

May the Lord hasten the day when more people will submit to the will of God that unity might prevail among believers in Christ and, most of all, that souls might be saved through obedience to his will.

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## Narrow - Mindedness

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

### A Common Reply

One of the most frequent heard expressions in religious conversations is this: "But, I don't see it that way. You're too narrow-minded".

It is my personal conviction that many who make this reply are sincere, but ignorant of a few vital principles.

### Why the Charge?

Why do the populace, generally speaking, charge the churches of Christ with narrow-mindedness?

I believe the occasion of the charge, basically, is this: people generally make absolutely no distinctions whatever among religious practices and judgments. That is, people seem to think that one has a right to his opinion in any religious argument, regardless of what the issue of that argument may be.

In other words, people seem to think that human opinion ought not be circumscribed or limited in any way.

Therefore, when members of churches of Christ seek to restrict, and rightly so, human judgment to matters of expediency they are charged with narrow-mindedness.

### Two Categories

Religious practices and judgments inevitably fall into two groups: first, some things are matters of faith; second, other things are matters of expediency.

But what is an item of faith? If a practice or judgment is a direct result of express Bible teaching, it is a matter of faith.

On the other hand, an expedient measure merely assists in the carrying out of a command or teaching.

Now, any individual who respects the authority of the Bible knows very well that human opinion CANNOT be exercised in matters of faith.

On the other hand, human opinion MUST be exercised in matters of expediency.

### How the Bible Teaches

It has been pointed out that if a practice is a direct result of express Bible teaching, that practice is a matter of faith.

However, it is expedient to show that the Bible may teach in one of several ways.

Hence, all practices resulting from these teaching methods are matters of faith and cannot be altered in any way by human judgment or opinion.

### By Express Statement

A great number of Bible teachings are taught in simple or express statements.

For example, that Jesus was to build His church is taught in the simple statement of Matt. 16:18. No amount of human desire or opinion can alter that teaching.

Further, the absolute necessity of baptism for the

remission of sins is taught in the simple statement of Mark 16:16. Therefore when one insists on baptism for the remission of sins, he is not narrow-minded. He is simply defending a principle of faith.

### Direct Command

Direct commands result in many religious practices. Observance of the Lord's Supper comes from the command of Luke 22:19, etc. Hence, if an individual thinks that rigid observance of the Lord's Supper is narrow-mindedness, he is mis-informed.

According to Heb. 10:25 public worship is not optional, but is expressly commanded. Hence, I cannot change, by my opinion, this arrangement.

### Necessary Inference

Some convictions must be necessarily inferred from premises the Bible states. The Bible does not expressly say that the soul of Jesus went to Hades. But from Acts 2:31 this truth must be inferred.

### Apostolic Example

Weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is authorized by the example of Acts 20:7.

I have yet to find, even among secular writers, a reputable Bible scholar who denies that Acts 20:7 reflects a general first century practice among Christians.

### Matters of Expediency

It should be obvious that such things as the place of baptism; the kind of song book; the kind of communion set; the time of observing the Lord's Supper on Sunday; etc. are matters involving human judgment. God never bound these things. These things merely assist in the carrying out of the commands that God did bind.

These expedient measures may be altered by human judgment, but the principles underlying these measures came directly from God; therefore, cannot and must not be tampered with in any way.

## Special Issue in April

The April issue of this paper will be devoted to the discussion of miracles and "divine healing". In view of the increasing number of "Faith healing" campaigns, a detailed study of the subject should be of interest to all. If you would use extra copies at \$1.00 per 50; \$3.75 per 100, please let us have your order during March. Bundles may be received on open account.

## In Whom We Have Redemption

### Ephesians 1:7

Christian fellowship is a joy indeed,  
Helping those who are in need,  
Understanding, compassionate, tenderhearted, kind,  
Real security in Christ with only one mind,  
Courage to press onward whatever betide,  
Harmonious living with Christ is our guide.

On him we can cast our every care,  
For he will hear our prayer.

Comfort in him who will not fail,  
Hope for a life beyond this vale,  
Refuge from danger and worldly strife,  
Inheritance to a mansion and eternal life,  
Salvation through his blood he shed so free,  
Trust in his promise of eternity.

—The Central Christian

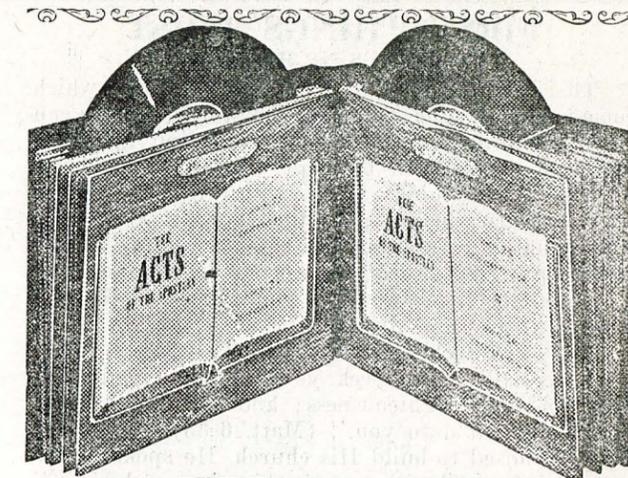
## Gems of Thought

"It wouldn't hurt so much to become angry, except that for some reason anger makes the mouth work faster than the mind."

## THE BIBLE

Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imaginary, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of calm for the time of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whisper in the ear of the lonely. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and penitent it has a mother's voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn pages. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams, so that love, friendship, sympathy and devotion, memory and hope, put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh. No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure of his own. When the landscape darkens and the trembling pilgrim comes to the valley named of the shadow, he is not afraid to enter; he takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand, he says to his friend and comrade: "Goodbye, we shall meet again," and comforted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who walks through darkness into light.—Henry van Dyke.

The person with but little to share is always willing to share it.



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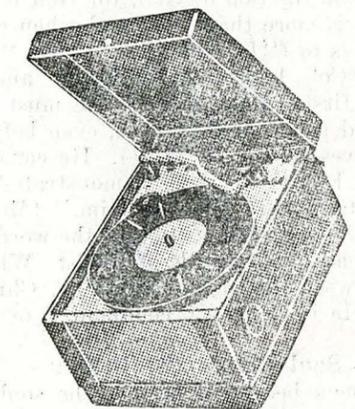
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