The Christian
COURIER

Post Office Box 1342
Modesto, California 95353

Published Monthly, by Brethren of the Church of Christ

NOVEMBER 1975

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Rom. 1:16. The word translated "power" in our text is the same greek word from which we get our English words dynamite, dynamic, and dynamo. This gives us an idea of how great and powerful the gospel really is. We must remember that Paul is writing to a power loving and conscious people. Rome was a **mighty civil** state, and she took great pride in her power. But even in view of this, Paul boasted of a power greater than any unbelieving Roman had ever experienced. This power of which he spoke was not a power demonstrated by carnal weapons, but rather a soul-saving power. A power of the heart.

The power of God is manifested in many ways. The mountains are raised up, and the depressed valleys are manifestations of God's power. All the beautiful works of nature including the wonder of thunder, lightning, and rain tell us of the power of God. However these things are not the power of God to save. Of all the power of God, only a certain portion is utilized for the saving of souls, and that portion is the GOSPEL.

But next, we ask, what type of power is the Gospel? Jesus answers for us in Matt. 13:15, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes, they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with **their heart**, and should be converted and I should heal them." You will notice that their healing and conversion depended upon their first hearing and understanding. We therefore conclude that the gospel is a power manifested in words. It is an intellectual power. A power that can be heard, understood, and believed. It is a power that causes

men to turn their back on sin, and resign their heart and life to Christ. Perhaps you are wondering what "word power" is. For example let us look at the constitution of the United States. It is a power contained in words. However, even though it is just a group of words, it has moved and inapired men for years.. These words formulate and guide our lives as American citizens. This is similar to the gospel. It is a power contained in words, and if these words are spoken and they find lodgment in good hearts, they produce the desired results.

Since there are several figures used in the Bible to describe the power of the gospel, let us notice some of them:

First of all, the Bible speaks of itself as being seed. Jesus in Luke 8:11 says that "the seed was the word of God." What a powerful thing a tiny seed is. When placed in the soil, and given the proper amount of water and sunshine it reproduces itself. From this small seed a mighty plant or tree will eventually grow. If the gospel bears a resembelance to a seed, then it must also produce something. When the gospel is planted in the soil of the human heart, and the right process is followed, a child of God will result. In Jas. 1:8 we read, "Of his own will, begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." Again in 1Pet. 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." There are several interesting relationships between the gospel and a seed that we would like to notice.

A while back some searchers uncovered some seed had been lying there for hundreds of years. However, it was taken, planted, nourished, until it reproduced itself it was wheat. There are two things outstanding about this illustration. (1) The length of time the seed had been there had nothing to do with its ability to reproduce. (2) The length of time the seed had been there did not affect WHAT if produced. We must gain a lesson from this. The word of God or Gospel is the seed of the kingdom, thus whenever and whereever it is planted it will always produce the same thing. It cannot produce something today that it did not produce years ago, and vice-versa. The idea that one seed produces several fruits or vegetables is unreasonable. And the idea that the word of God produces different religious bodies, is just as unreasonable. No one has ever seen a vine that will grow tomatoes, peppers, berries, etc. all at the same time. And we cannot expect the word of God to do something that would be wholly inconsistent with certain figures used to explain its power.

The Bible is also compared to a light. Light is one of the most compelling things in existance. Where it exists, there is no darkness. Without it we wander about helplessly and aimlessly. But with its ever abiding presence, we see clearly the way before us. No wonder David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." God's word lights the dark corners of the pages of history. Questions such as: from whence came man? where is he going? is there life after death? are all brought to light in the Bible. This Book informs us when nothing else can. It supplies the answers to our unanswered questions. It not only does this, but also serves as a guide and directing force in the life of every man.

Next let us notice Jer. 23:9, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Here two figures are used. First a fire. Fire is a purifying agent. It is used by the refiner to get rid of slag and dross in gold or silver. First of all the raw metal is placed in the crucible, then it is heated until it becomes molten. The impurities in it gradually rise to the top. When this happens, the refiner drags them all to one side and disposes of them. Left is the pure molten metal free from all filth and impurities. So it is with the word of God. We are cast into its crucible and there the heat of divine truth is applied to our lives. Gradually all the impurities of sin rise and the Great refiner takes them away. Remaining is what God strives for in all our lives. PURITY, made so by the word of God.

But the prophet also declares that the word is a hammer. It breaks the rock in pieces. Long, long ago, rocks were heated and then broken into pieces with a huge hammer. Of course the rock did not break immediately, however, with repeated blows of the hammer they eventually gave away. So it is with us, the power of the gospel beats away at our hard, stony heart. After many continuous blows, our heart is broken and our will resigned to the Heavenly Father.

There is also another figure. This time the Word is refered to as the sword of the Spirit. We are told that it is "quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12). A sword is a weapon of warfare with which one may either defend himself, or execute his enemy. The gospel is like this. It aids in the defense of the true Christian, and destroys the false prophet.

When the sword of the Spirit is used correctly, wonderful things happen. However, when we use it incorrectly, the result is self-destruction. Paul spoke of those who wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. May God help us to use "the sword" wisely, and to be eternally grateful for its help and assistance.

Now that we have noticed what type power the gospel is, as well as some figures expressing its power, perhaps it would be good to turn our attention to what the gospel will do. First we believe that the gospel begats us, so that we may be born into the family of God. 1Pet. 1:23, "being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." Thus it is the word that allows us to be born again. The gospel also gratifies our hunger as a child of God. 1Pet. 2:2, "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby." Again, the word gives us faith. Rom. 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It is the powerful word of heaven, that produces faith in the heart of man. Where is the man who can deny it? The athiest, infidel, and agnostic must all bow in its presence. In 2 Tim. 3:15 we read, "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." One who knows the Holy scriptures is wise unto salvation. What a powerful force, what a wonderful educating facility it really is. Last of all, the gospel saves us. 1 Cor. 15:15, "Morevoer, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are savrd, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

Yes, the gospel saves. It saved the Corinthians. It saved people on Pentecost. And on and on we could name others who were saved by the gospel. No wonder Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel" Indeed it was God's dynamic force in this world to bring lost man to his side. What a wonderful thing it is! Nothing on earth can compare with it. You cannot supplant the gospel of Christ. You cannot take it out of the way and hope to be saved. Our hope is in the gospel and in the gospel all a long. To it we must look for cleansing, and when we do,--we shall be cleansed.

Written in Brotherly Love, Ray Shea, Rt. 1, Fayetteville Arkansas 72701

IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:7

Jesus said in Jno. 14:6,"I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." And in Jno. 8:31 on, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (So the Gospel of Christ is the truth).

Jesus said in Matt. 7:21,"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 which is in heaven." And we read Him to say in Jno. 4:23 on, that the Father seeketh true worshippers to worship him. That God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him MUST worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. (So this is God's will) and Jesus said, "he that doeth the will of my Father."

Jesus said in Matt. 7:22, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"(Verse 23)"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (If they had worshipped according to truth, would Jesus have said,"I never knew you? This is something to think about, Eternity NEVER ENDS).

Matt. 18:20,"For where two or three are gathered together in my name,(according to His word, in spirit and in truth), there am I in the midst of them."

It is written in Heb. 9:27,"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement:"And Jesus said in Jno. 5:28 on,"...for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that heve done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."(so there is such a thing as a hereafter).

We read in 1 Jno. 5:11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." And in 2 Tim. 1:10, that Jesus Christ hath"abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Paul saying in Rom. 1:16,"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.(from the Faith the Old Testament Elders had to the Faith of Jesus Christ) "For therein is the righteousness of God

revealed from faith to faith..." Heb. 11th chapter speaks of the Old Testament Elders, saying in Verse 33 on,"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises,"etc. In Verse 13,"these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off."(here he speaks of the promises that are in Christ; as Galations chapter 3 explains it; that they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.(1Jno.2:15)By faith the elders obtained a good report. And in Heb. 116, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

In Rom. 3:26 God is a Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Jesus said in Jno. 3:16,"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And in Acts 17:30on, now God has commanded all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ; whereof he had given assurance unto all men, in that He had raised Him from the dead. And Jesus said in Luke 13:3,"...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (so man can either repent or perish), "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."Rom.6:23.

How do men repent? It is written, the word of God saying in Isa. 55:7,"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

We read in Rom. 5:8,"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."(Verse 9)"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."(Verse 10),"For if, when we were enemies,(sinners), we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." We read Jesus say in Jno. 14:19,"...Because I live, ye shall live also."(as we notice in Rom. 6:8 also).

In Rom. 5:10,"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Paul speaks of reconciliation in 2 Cor. 5:17-21, saying in verse 19, "...that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and had committed unto us,(minister of the New Testament), the word of reconciliation." Verse 20,"now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you

by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

In Rom. 10:8,"...The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith,which we preach." verse 9, "That if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God had raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And verse 10 explains, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," (which is by faith of Jesus Christ, as it is revealed in the Gospel). "And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

We notice from Acts 8:37-39, that this confession was made at the time of baptism. Philip was preaching Jesus to the Eunuch as they went, (and doubtless that Jesus had commanded his disciples to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,etc) Matt. 28:19 for when they came to a certain water the eunuch said, "See,here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." and the eunuch answered,(he confessed with his mouth the Lord Jesus), and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

In Verse 38 on, that he commanded the Chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him, and coming up out of the water the eunuch went on his way rejoicing.(he was reconciled to God). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:26-27.

We read in Rom. 6:3-11,"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:"(we are new creatures).

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death had no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ

our Lord."

We read in Rom. 8:1,"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." And in verse 5,"For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Verse 6,"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Verse 13 says,"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."(the baptism in Romans 6:3 on, agrees with the way Philip baptized the eunuch in Acts 8:37-39.) Jesus had commanded his disciples to teach all nations, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matt. 28:20.

And we read Jesus prayed for his disciples in Jno. 17th chapter, saying in verse 20, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also; which shall believe on me through their word."(Apostles teachings). They were teaching to observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded them. The Apostles do not teach to have instrumental music in Church worship.

Brotherly Love,
H. Stolnake
P.O.Box 846
Yakima, Washington 98901

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HOW TO COPE WITH PEOPLE WHO GET ON YOUR NERVES.

Most of us have to deal with people who drive us up the wall-a demanding husband, a nagging wife, a grouchy boss-and since many of these people just can't be avoided, you must learn how to get along with them.

Try to genuinely understand, rather than change, behavior that drives you to distraction. It does little good to tell people: 'Don't nag' or 'Stop being a grouch'. Instead, ask yourself why they're behaving that way.

Concentrate on the things you really like about an individual you find difficult, and compliment them on those things. Honestly praise their good points,and help them realize they're better than they think they are by encouraging them to do things they don't think they can do. Let people know it when you feel they look good or do a good job.

Adopt a long-term view of difficult relationships.

Individuals who get on your nerves won't lose their irritating ways overnight. So you must decide to adopt the attitude that you'll gradually manage to work out your difficulties over a long period of time.

Develop an attitude of "firm kindness." "Firm kindness" meands to be kind to people who upset you, while setting definite limits on just how far they can push you. This way, you can show sympathy for them and still stand up for your own rights.

Overcome your own tendencies to feel victimized. People who get on your nerves are more apt to be angry with themselves and the world than with you. By overcoming your tendencies to feel as if you're their target, you'll take much of the pain out of your confrontations.

Encourage the offending individuals to widen their fields of interest. Many difficult people deliberately curtail their activities because they fear rejection from new acquaintences-yet a wider sphere of activity is exactly what they need.

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OBITUARIES

Estle David Buckner

Brother Estle Buckner was born Nov. 15,1926 in Oklahoma, and passed away on Oct. 10,1975 in Medford, Oregon. He is survived by his mother, Sallie Buckner, Tulsa, Oklahoma; eight brothers-T.H. of Stilwell,Okla., George, Roy, and Elzie of Tulsa,Okla.;Henry, Houston, Texas; Taylor Jr. of Oden, Arkansas; Elden,Grants Pass, Oregon; and W.H. Oklahoma City, Okla.; two sisters: Marjorie Williams, Fresno, California and Zelpha Brewer, Grants Pass, Oregon.

Services were held on Oct. 22,1975 in Grants Pass, at Slawson's Chapel in the Valley Funeral Home with Grave-side services in Granite Hill Cemetery, Brother Harry Wegley officiated.

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Reed Thompson

Brother Reed Thompson passed from this life Oct. 27,1975. Services were held at Brownell Funeral Home in Harper, Kansas.

Brother Thompson will sadly missed by the Grants Pass congregation along with Brother Buckner where the two worshipped many years.

Brother Thompson is survived by his widow,Loretta of Medford, Oregon; two sons: Harry Lee of Medford,Ore. and Warren of Harper, Kansas; two daughters: Mary Peyton of Tigard,Oregon; and Alice Lemley of Central Point, Oregon. Plus many grand-children and great-grand-children.

CHURCH NEWS

CHICO, CALIFORNIA

A great gathering is scheduled for the congregations of the Churches of Christ in Chico, California November 27th through the 30th. Two or three services a day will be held, and are anticipating many guest speakers.

We of the Courier have tried to publicize this for them and hope to attend some or all of it if the valley fog does not come in and stop all traffic.

We pray this will be a great success and that in the future years this will continue to grow into a great annual event for the Churches of Christ.

If it be the Lord's will we will have a full report in the next issue or so of the Courier.

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HUMBLE, TEXAS

Dear Brethers and Sisters in Christ;

Everyone here in Humble is doing fine and we are happy to announce a new child in God. She was baptized on the 5th of October and her name is Tami Neal. Sister of Janet and Tommy Neal.

In the June issue of the Courier, if you remember, I told of how we are meeting in our home with(now)eight members and fourteen regular people. Also I told of how we do need help to buy land for a building.

Well! Thanks to two congregations and three individuals donations, we had enough to make a down payment on a lot of land for the Church. Thank You! We are making payments of $103.00 a month on the land, but still have the building to go.

We are still needing your help, because my living room is getting too small for our congregation to meet in. If you can, we would really appreciate your presence at the "building meeting" we are planning to have sometime in the future as soon as we are able to afford the materials. Hope to see you here!

God Bless You All,
Brother Ron Berry,
334 Bower Rd.
Humble, Texas 77338
Phone: Area Code 713- 446-7876

REYDON, OKLAHOMA

Dear Brothers and Sister;

This is just a short letter to ask you to put in the paper that we here at Reydon still hold Church Services each Sunday at 10:00 A.M. Those who are normally present are: Brother Walter Spurlin wife and family; Sister John C. Spurlin and myself, Larry Spurlin, my wife and daughter. We would still appreciate a few copies of the paper.

Some of the Brethren have expressed the idea that they were afraid we here at Reydon had moved away or something else. They feared we were not here anymore. That is why we would like to have you publish a short note just to let everyone know that we are still here and plan to be for some time and would be overjoyed at the presence of visiting Brothers and Sisters.

Our location for those who may never have been to visit Grandpa and Grandmother Spurlin here at Reydon is 1½ miles north on the left hand side of the road from Reydon. Phone number 655-4408.

Everyone here is fine. Grandmother(Sister Spurlin) is living with Mom and Dad,(Brother and Sister Walter Spurlin) on the farm where her and Grandpa have lived for many years.

The Address there is: Rt. 1 Box 144,Reydon,Okla. 73660.

Our address is Larry Spurlin, P.O.Box 54, Reydon, Okla. 73660.

Thank you,
In Christian Love,
Barbara, Becky & Larry Spurlin.

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MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

The congregation here is doing quite well,after much illness and deaths. We are praying for a good winter and that no real bad illnesses hit the congregations.

Sister Sandi Logan, neice of Brother and Sister J.D. Logan was injured in an automobile accident Nov. 15,1975. Totaled out her automobile and hurt her quite badly. She has gone home to her folks in Covelo,Calif. until she is better and able to go back to work. She resides and works in Stockton, making her home with Brother and Sister J.D. Logan.

Anyone passing through this way stop and worship with us at the corner of Glen & Dallas St. Modesto.

OUR THANKS

It has been seven years since we of the Modesto congregation undertook to publish the Courier. It was in December of 1968 when we made our first attempt.

Since that time we have seen many disappointments and many encouraging triumphs. Many have helped and, sorry to say, some have failed for who we had high hopes.

Now, we are passing the responsibility to other hands. The next edition of the Courier will come to you from the Brethren at Yakima, Washington.

We have every reason to have high hopes for the future of the paper. There are many young men in the Yakima congregation who are very capable to do this work and many who are seasoned, older Brethren to advise and counsel, and this is as it should be.

So, we call our time to an end with a few words of advice for those who take a responsibility on themselves.

> Do not engage in foolish questions which can only divide.
>
> Do not be too disappointed when your response is small; remember, we are all too human: We forget too soon.

Our thanks go out to all who helped in all ways while we labored, and our call is for all to close ranks behind the new laborers.

May the blessings of Almighty God accompany them in all their labors and assist them in their difficulties is our prayers.

The Courier Staff:

Brother & Sister Dean Guyer

Brother & Sister Al Burtis

Brother & Sister J.D. Logan

and helpers from time to time.

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PSALM XIX

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.