

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

ARE WE GROWING AS CHRISTIANS?

International Sunday School Lesson for July 11th, 1954.

Memory Selection: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II Peter 3:18.

Lesson Text: I Cor. 3:1-3; Eph. 4:11-16; II Peter 1:5-8; 3:18.

While every mother regrets to see her children grow into maturity and leave the old home, every mother would agree that there is nothing more pitiful than a child who fails to develop into full maturity. There are those who, though they grow old in years and sometimes in bodily stature, fail to develop mentally and remain as children mentally. Ad it is a terrible sight to behold!

This lesson for today bids us take a look at ourselves—which is a good thing to do from time to time. Just how mature are we, spiritually? We have been blessed with bodies which matured perfectly and with minds which developed, but how about our spirits?

In our scripture reference from I Corinthians, the Apostle Paul is writing to the Christians in the church at Corinth. These Christians, Paul says, had been acting childish. They had been quarreling among themselves and had divided themselves into groups—some were following Paul, some were following Appollos and others, Cephas. Paul, in his letter, tells them to forget Paul, and Appollos, and Cephas, and to follow Jesus Christ.

These early Christians were also jealous of each other. They were squabbling over who should hold the highest offices in the churches, which reminds us of some of our churches today. The majority of the difficulties in churches today, as it has been in the past, is over the desire for position by one individual, or a group of individuals, over another.

Paul very frankly told the Corinthians they were acting like "babies." For this reason, he declared, he could not feed them as adults should be fed—on meat—but would have to continue to feed them on milk. What he was trying to get them to see was that they needed to grow up and act like adults. What they needed to feed on was the plain, simple Gospel of Christ—to study it and understand it and live by it.

This theme is continued in his letter to the believers in the church at Ephesus. He warned them to become so grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that they would no longer be driven about by every wind of doctrine. Have you ever stopped to think how many denominations there are of Christian people in the world today? Thousands upon thousands of them—most of which were brought about by some slight shading of some doctrine of the church. While we, presumably, do not believe there will ever be just one big church, we do think that Christians everywhere should get their feet more solidly on the ground of Christian doctrine, so that one man, or a group of men, cannot sway them hither and yon.

While Paul, in I Corinthians gives us his formula for Christian growth, and in Ephesians he stresses the character of Jesus Christ's gospel as the goal of growth in Christian unity and love, Peter, in his second gospel, stresses the vital importance of that growth, and gives a distinct pattern for that growth.

The fifth, sixth and seventh verses contain an ascending ladder of virtues which every Christian should develop in his life. Beginning on a foundation of faith—the starting point of our life with Christ, we are to work with continuous and persevering effort and careful attention to supplement this faith with virtue—moral excellence or just plain goodness. To faith, plus goodness, we must add knowledge—not just the accumulation of facts but the ability to enhance facts with insight.

To faith, plus goodness, plus knowledge, Peter would have us add temperance, or self-control. No life can be a success without self-control. Then, Peter advises that the Christian should cultivate the characteristic of patience—the ability to wait calmly without wavering, believing that God knows all. To patience should be added godliness—God-likeness, if you please. This God-likeness would not be like God at all if it did not include brotherly kindness, and brotherly kindness is impossible without the climaxing virtue of love.

In the ideal life, these attributes are linked one to the other, and each succeeding element enriches and makes more perfect the preceding virtues. Faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love—if these are possessed, says the great Apostle Paul, your life will not be idle nor unfruitful in the cause of the kingdom, but you will "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

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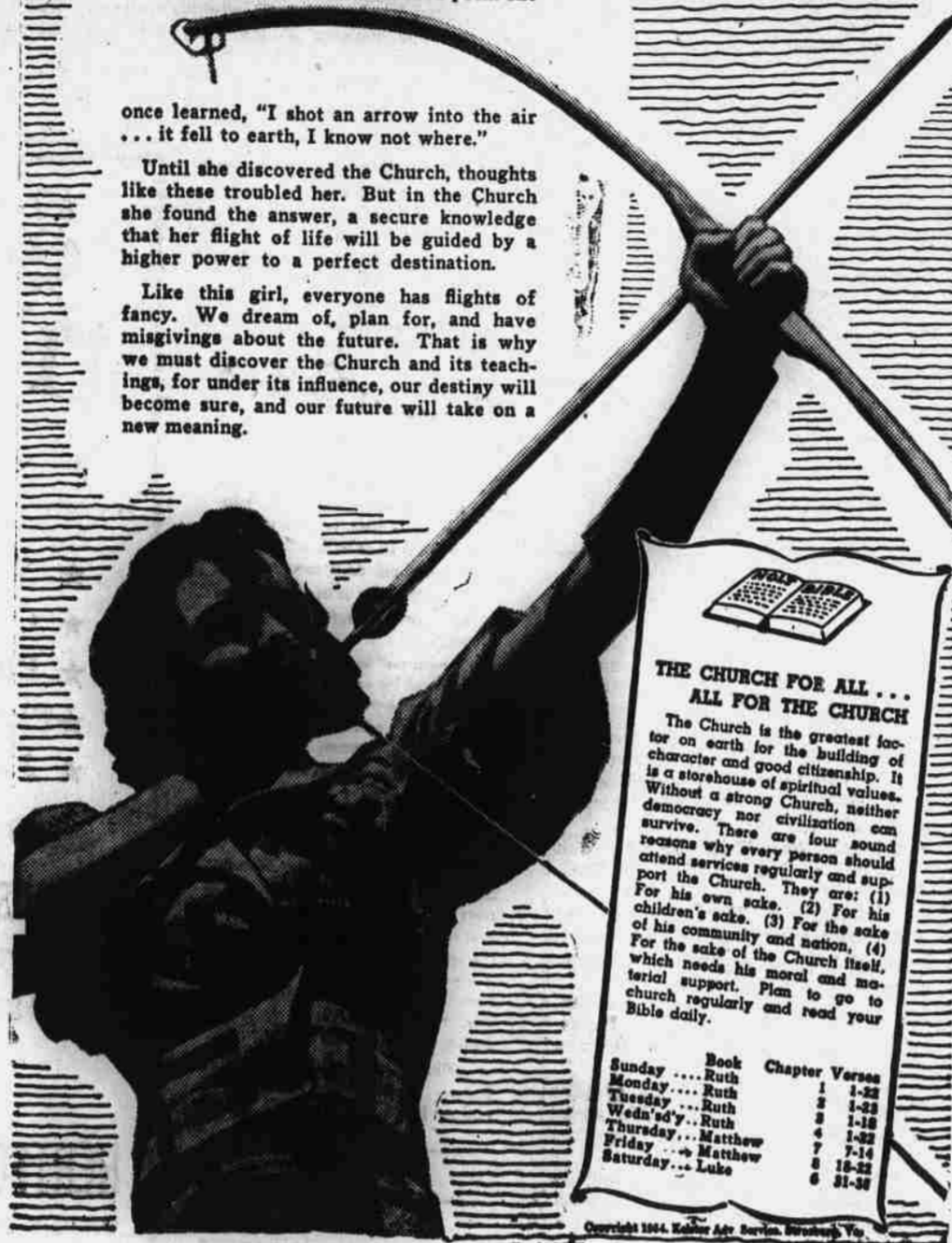
I SHOT AN ARROW...

In the flight of an arrow this young lady glimpses something of the question mark that is life. She compared herself to the arrow, trembling and plunging toward the earth... falling at some distant, unknown point. She thinks of the childhood poem she

once learned, "I shot an arrow into the air... it fell to earth, I know not where."

Until she discovered the Church, thoughts like these troubled her. But in the Church she found the answer, a secure knowledge that her flight of life will be guided by a higher power to a perfect destination.

Like this girl, everyone has flights of fancy. We dream of, plan for, and have misgivings about the future. That is why we must discover the Church and its teachings, for under its influence, our destiny will become sure, and our future will take on a new meaning.



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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
James O. Mattox, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
First Sunday
11 A. M. and 8 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
W. E. Thompson, Pastor
Church services second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
H. M. Jamieson, Pastor
First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:00 P. M.
Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:00 P. M.
Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
C. H. Beale, Pastor
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Hugh Ross Williams, Pastor
Church Services on second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
First and Third Sundays at 7.45 P. M.
Sunday School 9:45 A. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
James Rahenkamp, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services 11 A. M., - 7:30 P. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.
Prayer Service, Wednesday 7:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. D. Stoner, Pastor
Sunday School 10 A. M.
Morning Worship 11 A. M.
Evening service 8 P. M.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
D. Virgil Pike, Pastor
Church School 10 A. M.
Morning Worship 11 A. M.
Young People's Meeting 7 P. M.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Caleb Goodwin, Jr., Pastor
Sunday School, 10:30 A. M., every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 3 P. M.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
A. L. Chaplin, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Rev. Charles F. Wulf, Rector.
9:45 A. M., Church School, every Sunday.
9:00 A. M., Holy Communion, 1st Sunday.
8:30 A. M., Holy Communion, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays.
11:00 A. M., Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday.
11:00 A. M., Morning Prayer, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays.
10:00 A. M., Holy Communion, Fridays and Saints' Days.

BERRA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor
2nd and 4th Sunday at 10:30 A. M.
Morning worship on first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first and third Sundays at 7:30 P. M.

CHAPPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Vivian Evans, Pastor
Sunday School every first and third Sunday at 10:30 A. M. Preaching service at 11:15 A. M.
Sunday School every second and fourth Sunday at 11:00 A. M.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Do Go