

## **Favorite Bible Version** **By Paul R. Blake**

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, The first. Jesus said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:28-31).

Four Christians were discussing the merits of the various translations of their favorite Bibles. One liked the King James Version best because of its majestic flavor and almost poetic English. Another preferred a more scholarly American Standard Version because it was closer to the original Hebrew and Greek. Still another liked the New King James Version because of its easily comprehended contemporary vocabulary.

The fourth Christian was silent for a moment, then said, "I like my mother's translation best." Surprised, the other three said they didn't know his mother had translated the Bible. "Yes," he replied. "She translated it into life, and it was the most convincing and understandable translation I ever saw."

Rather than focusing on translations, this Christian remembered that the most important matter should be learning God's Word and living it. That was the top priority of Ezra's life. As a scribe, he studied the Law, obeyed it, and taught it to the Israelites (Ezra 7:10). "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel." He was effective because he lived what he read.

We often sing the hymn "We are the World's Bible." What version of the scriptures are lost sinners reading in your life?

Some Christians do not pray in restaurants, and they often order the waitress around like a personal servant. What version of the Bible are you displaying at Bob Evans or Cracker Barrel?

Some brethren treat a male visitor with an earring like he was a bad smelling leper. What version of Holy Writ is being read in this church building when you do that?

"I've got my King James Bible under my arm; I'm on my way to heaven." "I study from the American Standard Version, the most accurate translation; I know I'm saved." Don't tell me what translation of the Bible you are reading; show me what translation of the Bible you are living. I am sure the Pharisees read from the King James Version of the Law of Moses, too.

## **Try God** **By Kent Heaton**

"The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. Every one of them has turned aside; they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God? There they are in great fear where no fear was, for God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you; You have put them to shame, because God has despised them. Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God brings back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad." (To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath." A Contemplation of David. Psalm 53)

Bumper stickers can say a lot in few words. The back of the van had a small sticker that simply read, "Try God." There seems to be an appeal to draw a person to seek the Lord for the

answers to life but the petition was faulty. It does suggest a need to turn to God for help but limits the response to something one should try without committing. Buying a new car involves trying different models to find one that suits the needs and desires of the owner. Trying out new foods is experimental rejecting tastes that are displeasing. Going to the store to try on clothes is shopping for a bargain. God cannot be bought like a car or tried as an experiment. When someone tries God like shopping for clothes they will never find anything that will fit because the Lord is so great and we are so small.

The truth of it is the way that most people approach God is to try Him first and then decide. God is not someone who asks man to try Him. There is only one choice. There is only one way. There is only one hope. Anything less than full commitment denies the existence of God. Jesus did not suggest for man to come to Him and take Him for a test drive. Salvation is not a choice man has based upon the whims of man's carnal desires. When the Lord gave commands to Israel at Mt. Sinai He began with the no choice clause: there will be no other Gods – period. Throughout the Law of Moses God affirmed His presence by telling the people the reason for their obedience was because HE WAS THE LORD! He declares the same today. He is still Lord.

The little bumper sticker does define a generation. Trying God becomes a way in which man molds God into his own image. The Lord has been changed to appeal to the masses like a tooth-paste commercial. "Try God" is when modern religion dresses the Holy God in garbs of worldliness, entertainment, philosophy and fleshly appeal. There are many religious today but few are following the real God of scripture. Man has made God into his own totem where God looks like the tickled ears of man's creation. The fool can deny God by recreating the image of the Father into the image of the creation.

Try God and you will fail. Obey God and you will be saved. There is no choice. "We have lost the sense of God in the nation, in the churches, in our lives. The biggest business of the hour is to draw nigh to God that He may draw nigh to us. His presence with us is too often an assumption in our heads instead of an awareness in our hearts." (Vance Havner, 1901-1986)

### **Elephants in Church**

"Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them" (Ez. 33:32). A circus parade was moving gaily through the streets of Milan, Italy. Suddenly one of the elephants veered from the line and marched into a church. [In Milan, church doors are large, and in the summer are often wide open.] This visitor wandered up the center aisle, trumpeted a bit, swung her trunk around and headed back to the parade.

Unfortunately, many humans seem to imitate this pious pachyderm. On a Sunday morning we lurch into church, make a few noises, observe the congregation, then step out to resume our place in the parade. The great drama of worship is played out, but it is lost on us. We are elephants in church! (By David R. Randolph, quoted by Donald P. Hustad in Jubilate II. Christianity Today, Vol. 37, no. 14)

### **A Moments Wisdom**

--You who believe what you like of the gospels and believe not what you like not, believe yourselves rather than the gospel. (Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, 400)

--Contentment consisteth not in adding more fuel, but in taking away some fire; not in multiplying of wealth, but in subtracting men's desires. (Thomas Fuller, The Holy State, 1642)

--Hell could not be Hell without the despair of accursed souls; for any hope is a refreshment, and a drop of water, which would help to allay those flames, which as they burn intolerably, so they must burn forever. (Jeremy Taylor, Twenty-Seven Sermons, 1651)