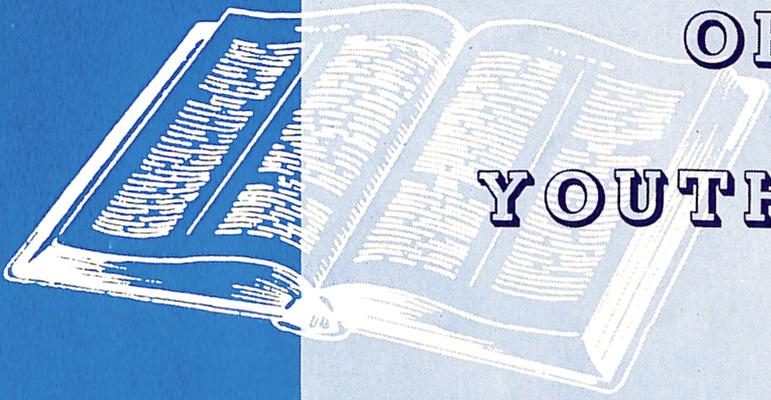


Box A-23

BIBLE STUDIES
For Fellowships
Youth Groups
Houseparties

THE
QUEST
OF
YOUTH



R. E. LAMB



Moore College
Library

**THE
QUEST OF YOUTH**

Bible Studies For Fellowships, Youth Groups and Houseparties

by

Rev. R. E. LAMB, B.D.

MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 2042 10089030 4

JORDAN BOOKS

24 Chick Street, Punchbowl, N.S.W., Australia

1963

Copyright 1963 by Jordan Books
First Edition August, 1963

All rights in this book are reserved. No part of the book may be reproduced in any manner without permission in writing from the publishers, except brief quotations used in connection with a review in a magazine or newspaper.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

Ecclesiastes 12:1

Wholly set up and printed in Australia
by Gowans and Son Pty. Ltd., Sydney.

FOREWORD

For almost a generation, Houseparties conducted either by the local church or some wider body such as the Church Youth Department have been a tremendous help to young people in communicating to them the central truths of the Word of God, and so bringing them into a vital relationship and friendship with Jesus Christ.

God has blessed this type of ministry in a remarkable way and there are many people serving Him today in all parts of the world who commenced their Christian lives in the Houseparty setting.

For some time there has been a very real need for suitable study books for people in their early and middle teens to use in Camps and Houseparties. Those of us who have been concerned with leading Bible Studies in Houseparties have been anxious to find something that, first of all, was Biblical in its approach, looking to the Scriptures alone as the means of Christian revelation and the basis of doctrinal teaching, and secondly, that was at the same time within the scope of the thinking of the average young Australian between 14 and 18, for so much excellent material formerly written has been at a University level.

Therefore it gives me much pleasure to commend Mr. Lamb's studies to Fellowship and Youth groups of every kind. My prayer is that every fellow and girl who uses this booklet will not only come to have a greater knowledge of the facts of the Bible, but a deeper longing to know and serve Jesus Christ and to continue His faithful soldier and servant.

J. J. TURNER.

*Director
The Church of England
Youth Department,
Diocese of Sydney.*

INTRODUCTION

The studies in this booklet 'grew like Topsy', being written initially for use at successive houseparties of one particular fellowship group. Over a period of time they have been collected and re-edited for more regular use as a series of studies within the framework of the weekly programme of a Fellowship, Christian Endeavour group or Youth Bible Study group.

There is nothing special about them. They simply aim to be clear and practical in their approach and method, and to come to grips with the basic questions of sin, repentance, the new birth and obedience — the A.B.C. of the Christian life. The titles of the studies tell a progressive story of man's quest for eternal life. The studies are so arranged to be successive, yet complete in themselves. In this way a selection of two or three studies could be used over a two-day houseparty, or the whole booklet could be used as a series of studies in a longer camp or over a period of time in the regular weekly programme.

Each study is primarily based on a passage of Scripture, and introductory and explanatory notes are given as a guide to the way in which the study may develop and be presented. Four general questions are attached as a basis for group discussion on the main points of the passage. Two further more advanced questions are added for use with older groups. The discussion of these studies should take from three quarters of an hour to one hour each to cover the subject adequately.

It is the author's prayer that under the Holy Spirit they may prove to be of lasting value in pointing young people to Christ the path of life.

WESTMEAD, N.S.W.
August, 1963.

R.E.L.

CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Introduction	5
STUDY 1: Off The Track (Genesis 3:1-13)	6
STUDY 2: Lost — How and Why (Luke 15:3-20)	7
STUDY 3: The Gate To Life (John 3:1-18)	9
STUDY 4: Which Path To Choose? (Matthew 7:13-23)	11
STUDY 5: Which Way To Live? (Mark 8:34-38)	13
STUDY 6: Which End To Reach? (Luke 8:4-15)	15
	17

STUDY 1

OFF THE TRACK

Bible Reading: Genesis 3:1-13.

God created the world and looked out over His handiwork, and "it was very good". God made man in His own image, and he was a perfect creation with no defects in his nature. He enjoyed all the benefits of the rest of God's creation, and lived in complete freedom and fellowship with his Creator.

But Satan like a gangster was on the prowl. Into this perfect picture came SIN as a dark despoiling intruder.

Man, who was freely subject to God, chose to break away from Him. He listened to the voice of Satan and disobeyed God. He betrayed the confidence of God. This was his downfall. It destroyed his fellowship with God, it brought about his death. He was "off the track" in life.

There were three stages in the first sin of man:

1. **Doubt, Disbelief and Denial of God's Word.**

v.1: "Did God say?"

v.4: "You shall not surely die" (cf. Genesis 2:17).

2. **Desire (or lust) for those things God has forbidden (v.6).**

Note: the lust of the flesh — "good for food".

the lust of the eyes — "pleasant to the eyes".

the pride of life — "desired to make one wise".

(Compare I John 2:16.)

Note also that in Genesis 2:9 God has made a proper provision for these things.

3. **Disobedience.**

"She took of the fruit and did eat" (v.6).

These three steps can be traced in every sin. Here is the original "pattern" of sin.

Notice the immediate effect on Adam:

1. He became afraid and lonely — he went and hid (v.8);
2. He made excuses and denied responsibility (v.12) — and all men have been doing the same ever since.

Sin ruined the human race. It spread to all men (Romans 5:12). Man now sins because he is a sinner by nature — it is natural to sin (Ephesians 2:3).

Sin has reversed man's nature, for self has replaced God as the object and centre of his life. It eats away his character: it is soul erosion — a cancer of the soul. It weakens the will, deafens the ear, blinds the eye (II Corinthians 4:4).

Sin has separated man from God. It has left him without God and therefore without hope (Ephesians 2:12) — a creature without his Creator who has no future.

Because of sin, man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) — a walking corpse!

The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth **shall** die (Ezekiel 18:4): God has said it. SIN is spiritual suicide.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the nature of sin as revealed in this passage from Genesis?
2. How does sin affect you and me? What are its consequences and penalty?
3. Can God overlook sin? Will not the God of love take us all to heaven?
4. How would you answer the statement: "I live a good life; I'm no sinner"?

FOR SENIORS

1. Compare the temptation of Adam in the garden with the temptation of Jesus in the desert. Can you discover a similar pattern of temptation involving the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life?
2. How are you involved in Adam's sin? (Romans 5:12-14.)

STUDY 2

LOST! — HOW AND WHY

Bible Reading: Luke 15:3-20.

The Bible clearly teaches us that Man is off the track. He has wandered off in error and lost his way in life. Man fell and lost his fellowship with God. His sin cut him off from God.

These three parables illustrate three ways in which we may be lost:

1. Unknowingly — as the sheep.
2. Carelessly — as the coin.
3. Deliberately — as the son.

Each one of us is or has been in one of these three classes. There are no exceptions — we are either lost unknowingly, carelessly or deliberately. And being lost, we cannot, or will not, find our way back to God's fold.

Notice: The sheep could not help itself — it had to be sought,

The son was out of range of help — he had to change his mind (repent) and return to his father.

God loves us all and will not be parted from those He loves until He has done all that He can to win us back. Therefore He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10), as did the shepherd and the householder. However, the lost must respond to the seeking love of God.

Notice both God's part and ours.

He seeks: the lost sheep and the lost coin were sought.

We respond: The unknowingly lost must welcome Him (cf. Romans 10:20, 21).

The casually and carelessly lost must accept Him (cf. John 1:11-12).

The wilfully lost must 'come to their senses' — i.e. wake up to themselves (v.17).

Man is lost and unable to help himself. He can only be sought and saved. God sent His Son that "whoever believes in Him might not perish (be lost) but have everlasting life" (be found).

Where are you today? Lost unknowingly?
 carelessly?
 deliberately?

Do you know? Do you care? Do you want to be?
 God Himself is seeking you. Will He find you?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the Bible say that the sinner is lost?
2. What are the effects of man's separation from God (lostness)
 - (a) in the world?
 - (b) in your life?
3. Why was it necessary that God should provide a way back to Himself for mankind? How is sin forgiven?
4. How can a person be found or saved by Christ?

FOR SENIORS

1. If we are born "lost", have these parables more relevance to the back-sliding Christian than the non-Christian?
2. How do these parables illustrate the conditions of those who
 - (a) have never heard the gospel?
 - (b) have rejected the gospel?
 - (c) are apathetic towards the gospel?

STUDY 3

THE GATE TO LIFE

Bible Reading: John 3:1-18.

Our Lord was here pointing out and explaining to Nicodemus the absolute necessity for spiritual birth, a passing through the gate to life. Man who is lost must be re-born spiritually.

"Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

V.1: Nicodemus was a man of irreproachable character, strict religious training and strong convictions — "a ruler of the Jews".

V.3: **Except:** Our Lord lays down an unconditional rule, and there is no other alternative.

be born again: be born spiritually.

he cannot see: he cannot experience and enjoy, and he is absolutely unable to understand or enter into, the kingdom of God.

the kingdom of God — God's family, spiritual life, and ultimately, heaven.

V.4: **How can this be?** — Nicodemus realises the impossibility of a physical rebirth.

V.5: **Born of water** — either:

a) physical birth — if born of the flesh (cf. v.6).

b) baptism — an outward stand (Nicodemus came by night).

Also Mark 16:16, etc.

c) the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5).

d) the washing of water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26).

be born of the Spirit — so a spiritual birth is necessary. This is quite distinct from physical birth. However gifted, moral or refined a person may be, he or she is altogether spiritually blind by nature (I Corinthians 2:14).

V.6: **that which is born of the flesh is flesh** — we receive physical life from our parents.

that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit — we can receive spiritual life from God alone. Such life is quite beyond the realm of morals, it is quite apart from what we are — it comes through the Spirit of God only. "It is the Spirit that gives life" (John 6:63).

V.7: So therefore — **marvel not that . . . ye must be born again.**

Every person stands in desperate need of spiritual life. Without it he is DEAD in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1), being born into this world in a state of sin and misery, having “no life in him” (John 6:53).

A spiritual BIRTH must take place. One may be born an Anglican or a Presbyterian or a Baptist, but one can never be born a Christian. A re-birth is necessary for that: i.e. a far-reaching, enduring and extraordinary change resulting in the passing from a self-centred life to a Christ-centred and Christ-energised life — a passing from “death unto life” (John 5:24).

No mere reformation of character, no external profession, no religious observances, can bring about this change or enable us to inherit the kingdom of God. Only an entire change of heart, an inward renewal of the will and affections wrought by the Spirit of God, can avail.

There is nothing in our nature which God will accept (Isaiah 64:6). An absolutely new start is necessary. So far-reaching in this change of nature and heart that Jesus called it a “new birth”.

This takes place, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus (John 3:9-16), when we yield ourselves to Him, and come to rest on His Saving Power in full surrender and whole-hearted trust. ANYONE can have this experience who is willing to fulfil the conditions (John 3:15-16).

SALVATION IS THROUGH FAITH. IF we BELIEVE, we SHALL LIVE.

Will you now believe? “He that believeth HATH everlasting life” (John 3:36), but “he that believeth NOT is condemned already (John 3:18).

BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ and THOU SHALT BE SAVED (Acts 16:31).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the root cause of spiritual blindness?
2. What is the “New Birth” and how does the New Birth take place?
3. Where is the New Birth different from “turning over a new leaf”?
4. What is the relation between
 - (a) The New Birth and Faith (John 1:12-13)?
 - (b) The New Birth and the Word of God (I Peter 1:23)?

FOR SENIORS

1. What is the relation between regeneration and conversion?
2. What is the relation between baptism and the New Birth? Are both essential?

STUDY 4

WHICH PATH TO CHOOSE?

Bible Reading: Matthew 7:13-23.

“Choose life!” were Moses’ final words to Israel (Deuteronomy 30:19). Our Lord speaks in a similar way of entering (or choosing) the gate or path of life.

In this passage the Lord laid on those who had been listening to Him a twofold responsibility if they were to pass through the “gate to life”:

1. The responsibility of entry into the kingdom of God as an individual: v.13: “Enter ye in by the narrow gate”.
2. The responsibility to do the Will of God: v.21: Not everyone that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven”

V.13: All have to enter INTO the kingdom of Heaven since all have been born outside and “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Each individual must enter the kingdom through Jesus Christ who said, “I am the door” (John 10:9), and “I am the Way (to God) . . . no one cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). For “there is no other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The gate is narrow because the Cross alone stands at the entry to God’s kingdom. No man can enter this kingdom until he is saved — that is, until his sin is dealt with, for it is man’s sin that shuts him out of God’s presence.

Christ dealt with man’s sin at the Cross (I Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24, etc.). Through the Cross the barrier of sin was swept away (Hebrews 9:26) and the way into God’s presence opened up (Hebrews 10:19, 20). But each person must come to the Cross personally to accept what was done for him there. A decision to enter the kingdom by accepting Christ is necessary.

Some can remember definitely the day and the hour when this took place. Others cannot be so definite. But there **must** be a time

(whether we can remember the exact moment or not) when we know we have decided to accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and have yielded our lives to serve Him as Lord.

V.21: Mere outward profession of faith or association with the Church, is insufficient. We must **belong to Jesus Christ**.

It is possible to have a formal relationship with the Church which is not a saving relationship with Christ. Those who wish to enter into this "new" life must submit to the personal claims of Jesus Christ and devote themselves genuinely and sincerely to obeying and pleasing Him.

Note more particularly the distinction between the two paths:

1. Two different gates (narrow — wide).
2. Two different ways (hard — easy). ("Broad", i.e. easy.)
3. Two different ends (life — destruction).

The Bible clearly teaches that we must make a deliberate choice of one path or the other. God does not force Himself on anyone (see Revelation 3:20). **YOU MUST DECIDE.** "Choose you this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

The choice is yours. Which path is your eternal soul to travel?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Consider the conditions of "Entry into life" outlined in this passage. What connection do you find with —
 - (a) Repentance — Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3?
 - (b) Faith — John 3:36; John 3:4-7?
 - (c) Obedience — Hebrews 5:9; II Thessalonians 1:8?
2. Is a personal decision absolutely necessary to enter the kingdom of God?
3. What is it to 'do the will of God' (v.21)? (See John 6:28 ff.)
4. How does one discern good fruit (vv. 16, 17) in the light of vv. 21-23?

FOR SENIORS

1. What does this passage teach about judgment?
2. Do verses 21-23 conflict with the doctrine of Justification by Faith Only?

STUDY 5

WHICH WAY TO LIVE?

Bible Reading: Mark 8:34-38.

Having chosen the path of life the next question to consider is, "Which way to live?" In the last study we noticed that the way of life as well as the gate to life is described as being narrow.

This passage deals more specifically with the conditions and cost of Christian living, and emphasises three main terms of discipleship:

1. Self-denial: ". . . let him deny himself and take up his cross . . ." (v.34).
2. Self surrender: ". . . who shall lose (i.e. give up) his life for My sake . . ." (v.35).
3. Witness — identification with Christ, separation from the world (v.38).

V.34: "If any one will come after me . . ." None is forced — but if any will be a Christian it must be on these terms:—
"let him deny himself . . ." i.e. his own will — the exclusion of all self-interest in all things great and small. We give up the right to run our own lives.
" . . . and take up his cross . . ." — in the same spirit of self sacrifice as our Lord. We too must submit to crucifixion, i.e. of our old self and nature, with all its selfish desires and habits (Galatians 5:24).
" . . . and follow Me." — in single-eyed devotion, neither looking to the right hand nor the left.

V.35: For whosoever shall hang on to his own life shall lose it; but whosoever shall give up his own life (in surrender) for My sake and the Gospel's shall find it. (See also Mark 10:29-30.)

V.36: What good shall it be to you if you gain the whole world at the cost of your own soul?

V.37: For what is your soul worth? Remember that for it Christ went to the Cross — so that the world may not cast its spell upon you. What stupidity if we wilfully abandon our soul to destruction!

V.38: Who then is ashamed to take this stand, of him shall Jesus Christ be ashamed

These are HIS terms of discipleship.

Two ways of living are set before us — the way of self and the way of Christ. Shall we then

Follow man or God (v.38)?

Live for the world or the Gospel (v.35)?

Serve God or Mammon (v.36)?

Please Self or Christ (v.34)?

The Christian Life demands nothing less than the deliberate setting aside of self in the service of the Master. A life of wholehearted service is the only true test as to whether a person is a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven.

Which way are you living — for self or Christ? You alone can answer.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why has Jesus Christ a right to our lives?
2. What demands does the lordship of Jesus Christ make upon us with respect to:
 - (a) Our time?
 - (b) Our material possessions?
 - (c) Our friendships?
3. How would you answer the statement, "You're only young once, and if I become a Christian now I would miss out on all the fun in life"?
4. In what ways does the teenager try to "save his life"? What things in the world are likely to attract the teenager away from Christ?

FOR SENIORS

1. How can there be conditions to discipleship when grace is free?
2. How is the truth of verses 35-36 worked out in the life of a church in relation to missions, and an individual in relation to getting on in the world?

STUDY 6

WHICH END TO REACH?

Bible Reading: Luke 8:4-15.

Our Lord used this Parable to point out the dangers and obstacles in the way of reaching a victorious and fruitful end to our Christian lives.

The Seed is the Word of God (v.11).

The Soil is your heart and life.

The word has been sown in your hearts. Have you received it with joy? Then how is it growing?

Note the four types of soil:

1. Barren — unprepared, unbroken.
2. Shallow — not watered.
3. Contaminated — not weeded.
4. Good — fruitful.

The result depends on the soil (i.e. ourselves) — the Seed is always good. The soil must be prepared. It is barren and useless until it is broken by Jesus Christ and this will only take place at the foot of the Cross. Only then can we really understand the Word of God.

When we receive (i.e. feed upon) it, one of four things may happen:

1. It will be taken away by whom?
2. It will wither and disappear why?
3. It will be choked and lost how?
4. It will bring forth fruit when?

Fruit — that is, a mature and stable Christian character — the whole result of our life. See Galatians 5:22.

Two powers are ever claiming us for themselves — the lure of the world, the flesh and the devil on the one hand and the Love of God in Jesus Christ on the other.

Our spiritual life will wither and fail in the time of testing unless it is founded and rooted in Christ. It will be weakened, corrupted and come to nothing if we pay too much attention to the things of this world, and will be swallowed up by the demands, pleasures and anxieties of daily living if they become our primary concern. These things must be purged (John 15:2).

The soil of our lives must be watered and tilled if spiritual growth is to take place. **The weeds must be torn out.** There can be room for nothing in the Christian life but single-eyed devotion to the Master's Cause, and the dedication of the whole being and all our possessions to Him.

One of two ends (and only two) await each one of us: a Crown of Life — the reward of a faithful and fruitful life (II Timothy 4:8); or the fate of death, bitter remorse, eternal separation from God — a fruitless branch that is cast forth and burned (John 15:6).

To which end is your life leading?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what way(s) does the devil snatch away the Word from our hearts?
2. How can we be sure our spiritual lives do not wither and die?
3. What and how do the riches and pleasures of this life choke the spiritual life of the teenager? Consider the message to the Church of Laodicea in this connection (Revelations 3:17). How can we avoid this danger?
4. What kind of life will bear fruit? What changes are necessary in our lives?

FOR SENIORS

1. Is the type of 'soil' our lives present to the Word of God a measure of our repentance? Does a quick response to the Gospel indicate shallow soil?
2. Can you relate the three "failures" to bear fruit in any definite way to the devil, the flesh and the world?

"How Can I Keep My MARRIAGE OFF THE ROCKS?"

by Rev. Vernon Turner

Director of The Christian Broadcasting Association

A series of helpful addresses given on the Australia-wide network of the Christian Broadcasting Association, now revised and amplified by the author for publication in this form.

Discusses the purpose of marriage, the Christian standards of marriage, some of the problems of marriage, and the way to make a success of marriage.

Price: 2/- (Australian); 1/9 (N.Z.)

"GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN WITNESS"

by Rev. Walter Spencer, Th.Schol.

A comprehensive guide to the personal preparation of the individual Christian for effective witnessing, and to the Biblical truths of the Gospel which underline evangelism, as well as to the techniques of personal work.

Written in a straightforward and helpful way that makes for easy reading and complete understanding.

Price: 3/9 (Australian); 3/3 (N.Z.)

OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO ALL ANGLICANS:

"TO TAKE IT UPON HIMSELF"

by Rev. B. W. Powers, B.Comm., Th.L., Dip.R.E.

An exposition of the teaching of Church of England Prayer Book. Contains a detailed discussion of the Catechism including several chapters on the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Sacraments, Confirmation and Living The Christian Life. Includes also a 20-page History of The Church of England from the First Century to the Twentieth Century. Written in an easy style that is informative and interesting.

Price: 6/- (Australian); 5/- (N.Z.)

IN PREPARATION:

"GOD GAVE ME A MICROPHONE"

by Rev. Vernon Turner

Director of The Christian Broadcasting Association

The fascinating story, told in his own words, of a clergyman who receives 50,000 letters a year through a microphone. The man exercising this unique ministry is Rev. Vernon Turner, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Association which distributes 15,000 Christian broadcasts a year to Australia's 110 commercial broadcasting stations.

Price: 19/3 (Australian); Postage 9d.

"THE CHRISTIAN LIFE" SERIES

Price: 1/6 (Australian); 1/3 (N.Z.). Available from booksellers everywhere, or from your Church Bookstall.

"THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS CHURCH"

by Rev. B. W. Powers, B.Comm., Th.L., Dip.R.E.

Contains three chapters on "Belonging", "Sharing" and "Responsibility". Discusses the relationship between the individual Christian and Christ's Church, and how he can—and should—share in the work and fellowship of the Church. Deals with the factors of Christian growth: Bible Study, Prayer, Christian Fellowship, Christian Witness, Christian Stewardship and Christian Service.

"THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS FAMILY"

by Rev. Vernon Turner

In a clear and helpful way the author deals with family relationships from the Christian point of view, discussing family problems, family responsibilities, bringing up children, etc. Especially designed for young married couples — and for those not so young. A valuable booklet for those about to be married.

"THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS WORLD"

by The Most Rev. H. R. Gough, O.B.E., D.D., M.A.

Discusses the mission of the Church in the world and the relationship of the individual Christian to the world. A timely, penetrating and balanced study of an important subject, of interest and value to Christians of all Churches. Contains three chapters on "The Church and The World", "The Dangers of a One-sided View of Truth" and "The Solution of the Problem".

"THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS WORSHIP"

by Canon D. B. Knox, B.A., B.D., M.Th., D.Phil.

A small book in which a great many important things are said in short compass. Canon Knox writes as an informed Anglican who is keenly aware of the trends in the Christian world today. He sets out clearly the essence of true worship and then discusses this in relation to the Prayer Book of the Church of England and to the question of church unity and lessons about freedom of worship to be learned for any union schemes today.

JORDAN BOOKS

Publishers of distinctive Christian Literature

24 Chick Street, Punchbowl, N.S.W., Australia.

UL 5202