

(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not
Words of T

the
6:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 1989

NUMBER 1

Some Very Popular "Lies"



W. A. Holley

God "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). In fact, it is "impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18). All men are warned, "Glory not and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14; John 8:32; 17:17). "If we say that we have fellowship with him,

and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:6-10).

We want our readers to understand that the foregoing quotation was addressed to children of God -- Christians -- not to alien sinners (Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

Contrary to many, a lie can be believed (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). An old prophet's lie was responsible for the unfortunate death of "a man of God" (I Kings 13:1-18). Actually, the truth of God can be turned into a lie (Romans 1:25). It is possible for one to lie, even unto God (Acts 5:4). The father of lies is none other than Satan himself (John 8:44).

What are some of the more popular lies? We shall discuss this question under two categories --

The First Category:

(A) "Join the church of your choice." Does Jesus Christ have no church? and no choice? We suggest that the following scriptures be read: Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6; 5:23-32; Acts 1:47. According to your Bible, no one ever "joined" the Lord's church!!

(B) "One is saved the moment he believes." Where does your Bible so teach? Sinners are saved by a faith that obeys God's commands (John 3:16, 36; James 2:14-26; Acts 10:34-35). Thus FAITH is classified as "a work of God" (John 6:28-29).

(C) "Let the Lord speak peace to your soul and take the Lord as your personal Saviour." These are very popular statements, coming from the lips of many preachers; but, where does your Bible make any such statements?? If you know where the Bible so teaches, please send us the scripture references. (Please read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4, 17-18).

(D) "Sprinkling and pouring are acceptable 'modes' of baptism." Many honest and sincere people believe this statement; but where does your Bible so teach? Baptism is an immersion in water (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

(E) "One should be baptized because one is already saved." According to the New Testament, baptism, as commanded by Jesus, is necessary to be saved (Mark 16:16). Acts 2:38 teaches that baptism is in order to be saved, "unto" (eis) or "for the remission of sins." Bible baptism is never administered "because of remission of sins," according to Holy Writ.

(F) It is asserted, "A piano or an organ is not so bad when used in the Lord's assembly." But, where does the Lord command its use? One pianist, when asked why the piano was used in their worship, replied, saying, "Because we like it." But does the LORD like it? He never authorized its use in Christian worship. (Cf. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15).

The Second Category:

(A) Many excuses are really lies; we simply do not wish to face duty's demands, and so we offer excuses (Luke 14:15-24). One church member who had gone fishing on Sunday morning, when reminded that he should be in worship at that very hour, said, "Well, if I were at home I could not attend services, because my dear wife is ill and I

couldn't leave her!" It does not require much effort to manufacture excuses -- they are ever available!

(B) Another, says, "I know I drink; but that's not so bad; everybody else does it too." One can rationalize almost any situation. Many try to find Biblical support for social drinking; but, if there were no social drinkers, there would be no alcoholics. Social drinking is a sin before God, and one reason is because it encourages others to drink. No Christian can afford to set a poor example before others (Revelation 21:8; Galatians 5:19-21; Proverbs 23:29-35). It is just as sinful to entice one to drink as it is to entice one to commit adultery.

(C) "Falsehood concerning absenteeism isn't so bad; it doesn't hurt anyone!" one tells himself. Satan often deceives thousands with such thoughts. Remember, God has something to say with regard to such action (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10). One sure way to destroy your interest and enthusiasm in the Lord's Cause is to simply stay away.

(D) Many contend that they "have the right to live as they please." They "can choose their own lifestyle," they aver. This includes marrying and divorcing as many times as they please. Such an attitude destroys the moral foundations upon which our nation was founded. One famous woman was expressing her concern for the future of the American home; but, at that very moment, she had been married to four men, and the one with whom she was then living, she had never married. What a bad example to set before others!! We suggest that Genesis 2:24-26; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12, be carefully read and applied to your life.

(E) What about those church members who try to soothe their conscience, claiming they "are unable to give to support the work of the Lord's church?" (Acts 5:1-11). There are three New Testament words which regulate giving: Ability, prosperity,

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Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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Some Very Popular "Lies"

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and purpose (Acts 11:29; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-7). Many can purchase the most expensive house, the biggest car, wear the finest clothes, and eat at the most expensive restaurants - but make token contributions to the Lord. One woman, a compulsive spender, using credit cards, ran up a bill of \$100,000, buying things she didn't really need -- but had no money for the Lord's Cause!! SHAME!!

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

News From Poland

According to Polish evangelist Mike Dawidow, the Minister of Religion for non-Catholic affairs recently addressed a group of brethren in Warsaw and commended the Churches of Christ for benevolent activities in the past (Polish Relief program of 1981-82) and said, "Poland needs people with high moral standards like the members of the Church of Christ."

He writes that through on-going negotiations with the ministry of religious affairs, our brethren were also granted permission to place Bibles in every hotel room in the state of Gdansk. This is the major ocean resort in Poland and one of the favorite vacation spots for all Eastern Europeans. This has tremendous implications for Christianity and the work of our Polish brethren.

Brother Dawidow again expressed appreciation for the part Sixth and Izard has played in making all this possible.

--"Keynoter," 12-22-88, Sixth & Izard Church of Christ P.O. Box 228 Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-0228.

"And Be Ye Thankful"

Yarbrough Leigh

To the Colossians, the apostle Paul wrote, saying: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:12-15).

As you can see, Paul was admonishing the Colossian brethren to build within themselves such attitudes and dispositions as would bind them together for the Lord in peace and happiness. Notice, particularly, the last four words in the quotation above: "And be ye thankful." Nothing more ennobles and beautifies the spirit of a person than does a thankful heart: a heart that is filled with gratitude to both God and man for the benefits received in life.

Did you ever pause to reflect upon the difference between the thankful heart and the unthankful heart? As we enjoy this season, set aside by our nation as a time of thanksgiving, I invite you to reflect on this difference, for just a moment.

The UNthankful heart is an UNhappy heart. It cannot be otherwise. Can happiness dwell with bitterness? Can inward joy live with selfishness? Can contentment co-exist with covetousness? To ask these questions is to answer them - and the UNthankful heart possesses all of these characteristics.

The UNthankful heart looks on all of its possessions as being for it, alone. It says, "All this I have by my own labor. It is MINE. Keep your greedy hands and eyes off!" And, because selfishness is always covetousness, the UNthankful heart is always UNSatisfied; therefore, it is always bitter. There are not enough possessions in the world to satisfy the UNthankful soul. Its perpetual cry is: "MORE! MORE! MORE!" Whenever and wherever it sees another

in possession of what it wants but does not have, covetousness will consume whatever measure of joy might otherwise have been present. The UNthankful heart will be always complaining, and considering itself deprived of its rightfully joy.

But, look at the **thankful** heart! It is a **happy** heart. It is always **at peace** within itself. It is a **contented** heart. It is a **cheerful** heart. It is a **loving** heart. And, if (I said, if,) it be properly instructed in the word of God, it will be an **obedient** heart. It will possess these happy characteristics because it recognizes its debt to both God and fellowman: never feeling self-sufficient, but always acknowledging its dependence upon others. It will demonstrate this awareness by **sharing** rather than by **grasping**; by **rejoicing** rather than by **envy**; by **love** rather than **resentment**; by **giving thanks** rather than by **complaining**.

Think about it, beloved brethren: Our world is filled with frustrations and fears. If we are UNthankful, we are defeated before we start! But a genuine spirit of thanksgiving can lead us to greater heights of joy. Let us read again the things Paul wrote to the Colossians, follow them, and, in all things, "**be ye thankful!**"

Give Me A Thankful Heart

For all that God in mercy sends--
For health and children, home and friends;
For comforts in the time of need,
For every kindly word and deed,
For happy talks and holy thoughts,
For guidance in our daily walk--
In everything give thanks.

For the sweet sleep which comes with the night,
For the returning morning light,
For the bright sun that shines on high,
For the stars glittering in the sky--
For these, and everything we see,
O Lord, our hearts we lift to thee:
In everything give thanks!

(Author not cited by our source - YL)

--959 Alford Ave., Birmingham, AL 35226.

Church Growth And Faithfulness

Nick Hamilton

It is a true saying, "Size does not a church make." Whether our attendance is going up or down is not the criterion for our approval before God. Faithfulness is. And faithfulness must be measured by the entire range of possibilities.

First, faithfulness is determined by our respect for the Word of God. Accuracy in interpretation and impartiality in application are essentials to faithfulness here. The Bible does not teach every doctrine being preached today. In fact, it does not teach many of them. While it seems to be unpopular in our society to view other persons as wrong, and certainly to tell them so, faithfulness to God will not allow us to accept every view commonly held by man.

Second, faithfulness is determined by our action

on the teaching of that Word. To know, and not to act, is the trap catching many of us. I have felt for a long time that the biggest problem -- on the whole -- of the audience that hears me preach on Sunday is not a lack of knowledge (though that is a problem), but a failure to put into practice what is known. We live far below our potential!

Third, faithfulness is determined by relationship that these first two establish. Our faith is in God, not ourselves. The "system" is very important, but solely because of the access to God obtained by following in that system. Our faithfulness is unto God, who alone has the power to save our souls.

I want this to be a faithful church. May God help us to that end.

--10900 Rodney Parham, Little Rock, AR 72212.

The Word Of God



W. A. Holley

God works in people. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Yes, God works in men and women! But how does he work? We shall see: "...When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

In the light of the foregoing quotations, we are forced to the conclusion that God works in people through his word (Hebrews 4:12). God does not work in men through dreams, imaginations, sorcery, witchcraft, enchantments, astrologists, psychics, and the like. We know that thousands today believe in such; but God speaks to men through his word -- only!! This is the reason why you should become a student of the Holy Bible.

Gospel preachers should make certain that the people to whom we preach, know that there is a **gospel preacher** among them. How sad, how tragic, it is when a "gospel preacher" finishes his sermon, some listener says, "That was a fine Baptist" or "Methodist sermon." **Gospel preachers** must show the difference between the true and the false (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23). "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing . . ." (I Timothy 6:3-4).

Ezekiel was one of God's great prophets. His hearers are seen talking with each other, but they do not take his message seriously. We quote, "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice . . . for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezekiel 33:30-33; Cf. 2:5). Paul taught preachers to "preach the word . . . in season" and "out of season" -- that is, when people want it, and when they do not (II Timothy 4:1-5). The people desperately need to know that there is a gospel preacher among them (Cf. Ezekiel 2:5; 30-33).

Improper Ways To Handle God's Word

(1) One can be unskilled in the use of God's word. The Hebrew writer says, "For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:12-14). To become skilled in the proper use of the word one must learn some facts about it. Careless or haphazard reading never produces the proper results. The skilled use of any weapon is a necessity (II Timothy 2:15).

(2) One can "wrest" or twist the scriptures. "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16). For example, many preachers, when they

come to Mark 16:16, or Acts 2:38, or Acts 22:16, or Romans 6:3-4, are unwilling to accept them at face-value; they torture or twist them, seeking to make them mean something else.

(3) Some make the word of God of none effect. What does this mean? Many make fun of the teaching of the Bible. Others mock, scorn, and ridicule its message, arguing that it is out of date. Some simply ignore it. To illustrate: take a glass of tea; then add a table-spoon of salt; and you have the refreshing power of your glass of tea destroyed -- made of none effect. When one adds the doctrines and commandments of men to the Bible, he makes God's word of none effect (Mark 7:6-13).

(4) One can blaspheme the word of God (Titus 2:5; I Timothy 6:1). To "blaspheme" is to speak evil of. One may blaspheme God, Christ, the doctrine of God, the church of Christ, or faithful members of the Lord's body. Men and women, boys and girls, who refuse to comply with the demands of Almighty God often also "blaspheme" the word of God (Titus 2:1-8). We strongly suggest that our readers turn now to the references cited and digest the thought presented.

(5) The word of God is often corrupted (II Corinthians 2:17). Many corrupt the word of God in order to make dishonest gain. The apostle refers to those false teachers who make merchandise of the souls of men through dishonesty and covetousness. Such preachers as Jimmy Swaggert, Oral Roberts, Jim Bakker, et al., fall into this class (Titus 1:11; II Peter 2:3, 14, 15; Jude 11, 16; Ezekiel 13:19).

(5) Paul said he had "renounced the hidden things

of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully . . ." (II Corinthians 4:2). What does it mean "to handle the word of God deceitfully?" Well, it means "to corrupt, especially by mingling the truth of the word of God with false doctrines or notions, and so handling it deceitfully" (Vine).

(6) Some stumble at God's word. We read: "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (I Peter 2:8). Israel stumbled in regard to Jesus Christ because his teaching, his atoning death, his resurrection, his gospel regarding his kingdom, were -- and are -- contrary to all their ideas as to the will of God (Romans 9:32; I Peter 2:8; Luke 2:34). Even today, many "stumble" over God's word because of its teaching concerning Roman Catholicism, or Denominationalism!!

How To Handle The Word

(1) Realize that "the seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Seed brings forth after its own kind (Genesis 1:11; Galatians 6:7-8).

(2) Receive God's word "as the word of God, not as the words of men" (I Thessalonians 2:13; Philippians 2:13).

(3) The word of God is God's "sword" which strikes deep into men's hearts (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).

(4) The "engrafted" (implanted) "word" brings about the new birth (James 1:18, 21-25; I Peter 1:22-25).

(5) You should "obey" God's word (Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4, 17-18). - Do it today.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

The Fog

Bob Plunket

Few things are more devastating than dense fog. One thing that makes it so devastating is that we do not fear the fog as we fear wind and lightning. It looks so innocent and harmless, yet it can be so deadly. I was on the river the other day when visibility was no more than fifty to seventy-five yards. It reminded me of the universe before God said, "Let there be light." I thought of the nuclear winter that scientists talk about should there be a war. It reminded me of the millions and millions in the world without Christ.

But I guess it reminded me most of the work of Satan. Like the fog, he covers the landmarks. These are so important as we travel through life. They let us know where we are, how much progress we have made, and how to find our way home. Satan, like the fog, brings distortions. Even that which we see, is distorted. Satan, like the fog, brings frustration and confusion. Satan, like the fog, can put us in harm's way.

I was hopelessly lost on the river, and became very concerned that I was in the barge channel. I finally dropped my anchor, found that I was in about eight feet of water, and I stayed there until

the sun came out. Fog can cause us to run over each other. Satan, like the fog, isolates us, and disorients us. It can render us helpless. One may have a motor and know the river; but in the fog it is no help. Satan, like the fog, brings cold and dampness and gloom to our world. Paul says in II Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not . . ."

It was so beautiful when the sun broke through. The fog was dissipated. The sky overhead was blue. The leaves were red and gold and I was no more than three hundred yards from home. In this world of fog and darkness, confusion, God let his Son shine and he brought love and light and life and beauty and grace and hope and peace and fellowship and vision! No wonder Paul would say, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift," John would say, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Our world today is in a spiritual fog, confusion, frustration, isolation, suspicion, rain. Our great country is in a spiritual and moral fog.

How desperately we need his Son.

--110 E. Fourth St., Tusculumbia, AL 35674.

Real Christianity Is Rare

Harvey Porter

We have often heard people refer to someone who is an average citizen and well-liked as a "good Christian." The person may know little about Jesus, never go to church, never study the Bible or pray; but since he is an "all-around guy," he is referred to as a "Christian."

Our standards are far different from the Lord's. And I might add, even in the church the standards are different. We have a mental picture of a "good Christian" too. He is one who is friendly and congenial, worships regularly, comes to classes, gives generously, etc.

Notice what Jesus said about the nature of his followers. It is disturbing. In fact, I think that all of us would have to say that we do not often see this kind of person.

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:27-31, N.I.V.).

In the church we are still working on trying to learn to love our physical family (husband, wife, children, parents, etc.). Jesus said that this was done even by the unbelievers. One should expect this much. And in the church, we are still working on loving each other, God's family; the one Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another" (John 13:34-35).

Level one is treating our own family with love and kindness and respect. It is expected in all of God's creation; and some who do not know Christ do treat their family right. It is also true that some who are Christians do not do so, even though they know better.

Level two is harder to do. It demands loving and caring for those who have obeyed the same Lord, who seek to serve the same God. It is a fellowship, a body, a family in a spiritual way. Here we find some who are hard to get to know. Some who do not respond as they should. Some who do not love us back, who are unfriendly. How do we respond? Some quit the church because the church is not what it ought to be. Some respond in kind-- treat the unfriendly the same, etc. Jesus is disappointed with us. He expects more.

Level three is the hardest of all. It is loving those you do not know very well and those who have treated you with hatred, meanness, and have even cursed you and hit you. Jesus said we should pray for them, give to them, and turn the other cheek when they strike us. We all know (?) that the Lord did not understand! That is not the way this world works! When someone hurts us, we have the right to hurt him back! Everybody lives that way -- even in the home -- and in the church! We would call the person a coward who turned the other cheek. People would always walk over us if we did

that. Wouldn't they?

Have we missed the heart of Christian living in personal relations? Do we really try to practice "Do to others as you would have them do to you."? We all know that the vast majority of the world and even the church does not obey this simple

"I Have A Few Things Against Thee"



Ron Harper

in existence. To a degree, this would be correct.

We see, however, that the Lord was not fully pleased with the situation in Thyatira. "I have a few things against thee." The problem was: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." The New American Standard uses, correctly so, the word "tolerate" instead of the word "sufferest."

What was the problem? A person in the church was teaching error, and the church was tolerating it. As a result of their toleration of her false teaching, people were being led into a life of immorality. The same thing will happen today when we tolerate error; people will be led into a life of immorality. I find it easy to overlook error. I

When the Lord addressed the church at Thyatira he addressed a church that had grown in "charity, service, faith and patience" (Revelation 2:19). They had grown in these areas in the face of strong opposition from Satan. By our standards they were one of the great churches

command. It is not because we do not understand it. It is because it is **hard**-extremely hard! Jesus did it -- and it took him to the cross, but his act saved the whole world!

Let's try it!

--7201 Montgomery Blvd. N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87109.

like to think about the good things taking place in a congregation. I like to preach lessons with a positive thrust. When things are going well in the area of "charity, service, faith and patience," and when we are growing, we do not want to deal with error -- lest we be perceived as negative.

It is then that I must stop and look at the results of giving place to error. In Thyatira, Jezebel had seduced saints to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. She was successful because she was tolerated. When we overlook any error, whatever ground we gain in other areas is lost as people fall into immorality. There is a lesson for the church of today!

We are fishers of men. When I go fishing I do not travel around the lake looking for snakes. If, however, a snake gets into the boat, I kill it because it endangers those who are in the boat.

We do not go around looking for error. At the same time, when it is taught, we oppose it because it endangers those who are in the boat.

May God give us the courage to oppose error when it rears its head in the church. May he give us the wisdom to know that fighting error is not all there is to Christian growth. There are also such matters as "charity, service, faith and patience."

--1115 Minerva Dr., Murfreesboro, TN 37130.

"In The Land Of Fadeless Day..."



Tim Orbison

desperately needed hope! Their very lives were threatened and they needed assurance that their reward was worth the effort.

What John described in Revelation 21 is a beautiful city where God will live with the saints. There was never any place like it before nor will there be again. A more beautiful place than what is described in verses 10-25 could hardly be: a city made of gold, garnished with jewels, with gates of pearl and lit by the presence of God! Such a home for eternity would be worth any price, wouldn't it?

Yet the beauty of the city is made even more of an attraction to me by what is missing. John said there will be no more death. There will be no more pain. There will be no more sorrow or crying for

In the Revelation, John recorded great words of hope for eternity. The new Christians were facing tremendous persecution by the civil government toward the end of the first century and they

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

How many times as a father have I held a tender, sobbing body close to my own while pain or sorrow pushed out hot tears from tiny red-rimmed eyes! How often have I longed for the ability to wipe them away so that they would never come again! But they come. As long as we are in this world we must face pain, sorrow and death.

If as weak and human parents we can yearn to ease the pain of our own children, imagine the boundless love and compassion borne for us by the Father of Lights! Yes, Heaven must be a beautiful place! May God grant to us a safe journey to his eternal home.

--3703 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, AL 35810.

**A Gift Suggestion:
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Words Of Truth

"I am no
Words of

the
26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 2

The Promise Of The Messiah



W. A. Holley

In a simple manner we shall discuss a subject which, perhaps, is the most important topic in the whole Bible. We shall allow the Holy Scriptures to speak for themselves.

We shall begin with Genesis 3:15, which gives the first faint promise of the coming Messiah: "And I will put enmity between

thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In the early morning of time, to the serpent these words were spoken by Almighty God.

Later, this promise was renewed to Abraham. God said, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3; Cf. 22:18; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8).

All of these passages were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

We have another statement of a prophetic nature by Jacob: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee" . . . "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Please read the entire context: Genesis 49:8-10). Here the reader should read Hebrews 7:12-14; 8:4).

As the years pass by, we come to Numbers 24:15-17, which should be read. We shall quote verse 10: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there cometh a Star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel . . ." God allows Balaam, a disloyal prophet, to foretell the coming of "a Star," and "a sceptre," which was eventually

fulfilled through David in the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1; Psalms 132:11; Isaiah 11:1).

In the book of Deuteronomy we have another wonderful prophecy of the great "Prophet" who was to come. Moses told Israel, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee, a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." . . . "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19). This passage was interpreted by Jesus and the apostles as foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah (Acts 3:22-23; John 5:43; 12:48-49; Matthew 17:7). Thus, the "seed of woman," "Shiloh," the "Star," the "Prophet," the "Son of David," the "Servant of the Lord," all blend into one person -- the Messiah.

Again, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). What does this verse mean? Does it refer to a young woman? Or to a virgin? Well, the answer is clear! An inspired commentary is found in Matthew 1:18-25 and in Luke 1:30-35, which states that the prophet had in mind Mary, a "virgin," the mother of Jesus Christ.

In another place Isaiah said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7). Clearly, the "Son" of this passage is to sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it. Solomon "sat

upon the throne of David his father" (I Kings 2:12), yet at the same time Solomon "sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father . . ." (I Chronicles 29:23). Solomon also sat upon "his" (own) throne (I Kings 1:37, 47). Actually, there was but one throne: the throne of the Lord (Jehovah), the throne of David, and the throne of Solomon. The only reasonable conclusion rational minds can reach is that the subject of prophecy was raised up to sit on "David's throne" (Acts 2:29-38; Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 4:12-16).

Another interesting and (in some ways) an astonishing prophecy is found in Jeremiah 22:29-30. The subject is Coniah and his future. We quote: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jeremiah 22:29-30). Coniah, Jeconiah, and Jehoiachin, are three names which belong to the same man (I Chronicles 3:17-18; Matthew 1:11-12). The lesson is: Coniah could have no son "sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." This scripture reference forever lays to rest the false doctrine that Jesus will sit upon the literal throne of David on earth and reign in Judah for a 1,000 years -- in the literal city of Jerusalem!! -- If he did so reign on earth, God said he "shall not prosper!"

Again, "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abuse him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezekiel 21:25-27, K.J.V.).

The rule of earthly Jewish kings is to cease! Sin and iniquity had been in charge long enough! The

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Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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Congregational Singing Is Commanded



Flavil H. Nichols

I am pursuing this study because we have been told by a leading preacher in the Conservative Christian Church that "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument." (Don DeWalt, in a letter to

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing" (from the Greek ADONTES, not PSALLO) "and MAKING MELODY" (Greek: PSALLONTES, a form of the word PSALLO) "in your heart to the Lord." While the human heart is the 'instrument' upon which this melody is to be made, it is to accompany the "singing" --which involves the human voice. As the vocal chords are SINGING, the heart melodiously 'accompanies' the singing.

For one to SING when he is alone will not satisfy the demands of this text! The Holy Spirit here requires that this "singing" and "making melody in the heart" be done in an assembly of at least TWO (2) people. He said, "Speaking TO YOURSELVES . . ." [King James Version]. This does not command one to sing to himself alone, when no one else is present; for in the American Standard Version this passage is translated: "Speaking ONE TO ANOTHER in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." It would be absolutely impossible for one to speak "to another" if "another" were not present! Hence, this passage requires an assembly of at least two (2) people. --And if TWO, then two hundred, or two thousand, are included. Thus the New Testament demands can not possibly be met when this PSALLOING is done in solitary, as in private devotions.

Now let us clearly prove that SINGING IN AN ASSEMBLY (of at least two) is **commanded**.

In Ephesians 5:19, "SPEAKING," "SINGING," and "MAKING MELODY" are participles. A rule of Greek grammar states that participles are controlled by, or are "under the regimen of," the principal verb in the sentence. Where the principal verb is in the imperative mood --is a command,-- so also is each and every participle in that sentence.

The principal verb of this sentence appears in verse 18: "BE FILLED with the Spirit." This (the principal verb) is in the IMPERATIVE mood, or is a command, an order. Since participles always are under the "regimen" (control) of the principal verb, and since the principal verb in this text is in the imperative mood, the participles in this text must also be in the imperative. Note the participles in this text: "SPEAKING to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING and MAKING MELODY in your heart to the Lord."

We have seen that the action of this text requires two (or more) persons, hence, it is action for the congregation or the assembly. And the action of this text is a **COMMAND**. Hence, **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING** is **COMMANDED** in the New Testament!

[Incidentally, this is a good place to remind each

The Promise Of The Messiah

Continued From Page 1

ONE to whom the prophet looked was the great Messiah -- the Priest and King who now rules over his spiritual kingdom unto the end of the world (Zechariah 6:12-13; Genesis 49:10; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:32; John 1:49; I Timothy 6:14-16).

We sincerely urge our readers to believe and obey the truth before it is too late (I Peter 4:17 with II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

When We Miss Wednesday Nights

Gary Colley

It is common to look at the attendance figures of most congregations and find the Wednesday night attendance figures to be greatly below those for the worship hour on Sunday morning. Sometimes the total attending on Wednesday night is one-half the Sunday morning figure.

Those who cause this difference by deliberately forsaking the Wednesday evening Bible classes are sounding forth a message to God and others. Let us look at some of the things one proclaims when he forsakes the Wednesday night Bible Study.

FIRST, one is saying that he does not need spiritual food. The Bible contains the necessary ingredients for one's spiritual growth (I Peter 2:2). Every Wednesday night some of those spiritual delicacies are set forth for those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Those who remain home during this spiritual feast act as

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Guy N. Woods, *The Gospel Advocate*, May 16, 1985, p. 293). Since then, in a debate with Alan Highers, Given O. Blakeley argued that there are no regulations in the New Testament regarding what to do in worship -- absolutely no Bible authority exists -- or is needed! --for any thing we do in worship!

If this were true -- which it is not! -- no one could properly object to handling rattlesnakes as worship!!!

But this doctrine is **FALSE!** God regulates our worship, and demands that it be "in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24). This means not only that one must be sincere, putting his heart --his spirit-- into the worship; but it also requires that every 'item' or 'ingredient' of worship be authorized in the "truth." Jesus identified God's "word" as "truth" (John 17:17).

We have long insisted that a thing may be authorized by either (1) a New Testament command, (2) an approved example, or (3) by necessary inference. I propose to show that **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING** is eminently scriptural, being authorized all three ways!

The Greek Word PSALLO Commands Singing

The Greek word PSALLO appears and is translated as follows: In Romans 15:9 "I will . . . sing;" I Corinthians 14:15 (twice) "I will sing"; Ephesians 5:19 "making melody"; and in James 5:13 "let him sing psalms."

Hear Thayer on PSALLO: ". . . IN THE N.T., to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song" [Emphasis his, FHN]. (Greek-English Lexicon, p. 675). Thayer translates I Corinthians 14:15 thus: "I will sing God's praises indeed with my whole soul stirred and borne away by the Holy Spirit, but I will also follow reason as my guide, so that what I sing may be UNDERSTOOD alike by myself and BY THE LISTENERS" [Emphasis mine, FHN]. (Ibid).

I call your attention to the use of a form of this Greek word in Ephesians 5:19. The text reads:

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Lessons From Acts Six

Clifford Dixon

In this chapter the choosing of seven men to serve tables so the apostles could give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word caused the word of God to reach many more people. Stephen, one of the seven, finds himself before the Sanhedrin court because he stood up for the truth against the zealous Hellenistic Jews. From this chapter then we can glean the following points:

1. **DISCONTENT AT PARTIALITY.** "There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (Acts 6:1). The apostles (no doubt, unintentionally) overlooked these Jewish widows who were comparative strangers in the city due to their being from countries other than Judea; but still the feeling of discontent was present. We must be careful in the Lord's church to have the same care one for another. James (chapter 2) points out that we should not hold the faith "with respect of persons." If there comes to our assembly a poor man in poor clothing, and there comes a rich man in gorgeous clothing, we are to treat them both alike. Every soul is precious in the sight of the Lord. The apostles realized this is true in the church, and so there asked the congregation to choose seven men to look after this ministration -- so that they could give themselves to prayer and to preaching the word.

2. **'DEACONS' CHOSEN TO SERVE.** "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3). The qualifications were that they had to have a good reputation among the people, show the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, and have practical good sense to get the job done which was theirs. While they are not called "deacons" in the text, their work was the work of deacons. This shows us that deacons are chosen because of a need for a certain service. This also shows that people must meet certain requirements to be chosen in the service of deacons (I Timothy 3:8-13). The work of deacons includes benevolent work, though their work is much more broad than this. Some scholars have looked on their work as assistants to the elders.

3. **DEDICATED PREACHING OF THE WORD IS ESSENTIAL TO THE GROWTH OF THE**

CHURCH. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). Some wonder how to make the church grow and come up with all kinds of gimmicks to accomplish the job! But the church grows correctly in direct proportion as to how faithfully and plentifully the word of God is taught to the people. Pulpit preaching, Bible class teaching, personal teaching, radio preaching, television preaching, the printed message, are all ways of increasing the teaching of the word of God. The most effective way is for every member of the church to be a teacher of the word of God to all he meets from day to day.

4. **DOING OF MIRACLES LIMITED TO A FEW.** "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). This is the first person outside the 12 apostles who is said to have done miracles. Where did he get this power? In Acts 6:6 we read, "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." This included Stephen, one of the seven (Acts 6:5). Later it was explained that "through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given" (Acts 8:18). This referred to miraculous gifts of the Spirit because the ordinary measure of the gift of the Spirit was given to all who were baptized (Acts 2:38). The apostles' hands imparted

miraculous gifts such as healing, tongues, discerning of spirits, knowledge, and prophecy (I Corinthians 12:8-10), which were needed in the early church in the formative years.

5. **DEFENDING THE FAITH.** The Hellenist Jews had a synagogue in Jerusalem and they began disputing with Stephen concerning the word. It is stated, "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10). Stephen was not out looking for a "fuss;" but when set upon by these people, he stood up for the faith of the gospel. He is an example of what all of us should do. We are to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). We cannot compromise the gospel and be right with God.

6. **BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED.** Those men could not get the best of him in discussion, so they hired men to bring charges against Stephen of blaspheming Moses and God (Acts 6:11). So this chapter closes with Stephen's being brought before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court, his defense, and his martyrdom. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:11, 12).

--P.O. Box 507, Jay, FL 32565.

When We Miss Wednesday Nights

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though they do not need this nutrition for their souls. At the present, these individuals may not be aware of it, but they are dying spiritually. One who does not eat in the physical realm will soon cease to live. This is also true in the realm of things spiritual.

SECOND, one who forsakes the Wednesday night services is saying with clarity that there are some things more important than gathering with God's people for study and meditation upon God's Word. Some of the "more important" things are television programs, the newspaper, homework, and the garden. A continuation in such a course will cause many people, even your brothers and sisters in Christ, to wonder whether you have been raised with Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

THIRD, one who remains at home on Wednesday nights also is stating that Bible study is boring and dull. It is amazing that one could call something which is more precious than gold (Psalms 19:10) "dull" and "boring." It is beyond comprehension that the Book containing God's mind (I Corinthians 2:9-13) could be thought of as dry and uninteresting. It is astounding that the map which will direct us to the heavenly abode with the Almighty and his Son (Matthew 7:21) can be said to be "stale" and "humdrum." Yet, that is what one who forsakes Wednesday night is saying.

FINALLY, one who forsakes Wednesday night is saying with certainty that obeying God's command is not important. Hebrews 10:25 commands that one not forsake the assemblies of the saints. Any one who forsakes the midweek assembly undoubtedly thinks the command is not important. Could he be mistaken? "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Revelation 22:14).

We urge each one who forsakes the Wednesday night gathering of the saints to change his ways. Make sure to attend in order to receive the spiritual food which is offered. There is nothing more important. Upon attending regularly you will find that it is refreshing and enjoyable; and you will obey God in the process.

--East Hill Church, 509 E. Madison, St., Pulaski, TN 38478.

Congregational Singing Is Commanded

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reader that the command to sing in the assembly should forcibly impress upon us two responsibilities: (1) It is a Christian's duty to assemble --to be present for corporate or congregational worship; and (2) no Christian should sit there with his mouth shut --for singing is a command, and it is impossible to "SING" without opening your mouth].

Congregational singing is authorized in the New Testament by command, approved example, and by necessary inference --all three!

But there is no New Testament command, no New Testament example, and no New Testament necessary inference for mechanical instruments of music in worship.

"With Grace, Seasoned With Salt"

Yarbrough Leigh

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6). A parallel passage reads, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

It seems strange that it should be necessary to warn Christians not to engage in corrupt speech. Yet, both observation and experience teach us that such admonition is sorely needed, and is often unheeded even when given in love and with much persuasion.

What is "corrupt speech?" Of course, filthy speech; that is: speech employing obscenities, gross cursing, and vulgarity -- especially when it appeals to the grosser and more base areas of human nature -- is "corrupt" because it endorses corruption and multiplies corruption. Yet, is not speech "corrupt" also if it stems from a mind that is distorted by anger, jealousy, envy, malice, bitterness, etc.? Can a heart that is filled with cursings bring forth blessings? Also, is not idle or careless gossip -- the thoughtless repetition of rumor and

hearsay which is not and cannot be verified -- "corrupt" speech? Even when there is no conscious thought or intent of injury or hurt, if a moment's careful reflection should reveal that harm, and not good, would be the certain result of the repetition of it, would not that be "corrupt" speech?

Paul's admonition is that our speech be "that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." Further, he admonished, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

What a world of good would be brought about were "Christians" to diligently practice such teaching! Alien sinners have been discouraged and turned away from obedience by "corrupt speech" from the mouths of professed "Christians;" whereas speech that is good and useful to edifying, etc., might have drawn them closer, and led them to be saved. Weak "Christians" have been caused to stumble and fall by the corrupt speech of other "Christians" to whom they looked for example and

encouragement. The usefulness of dedicated workers has been destroyed by the careless speech of thoughtless church members who "really didn't mean to do any harm."

James wrote, "For in many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). Farther on, he wrote, "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

Since the tongue cannot be "tamed," we must ever keep it "caged" as we would a wild animal that is not to be trusted to roam freely without restraint. Since even the best sometime offend in word, we must all watch and be on guard against bringing hurt and hindrance through idle or thoughtless speech.

We have a choice. With our tongues we can build up, encourage and strengthen; or, we can discourage, disillusion and cause to fall away from the truth. The choice is ours.

--Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, AL.

The Toughest Job (?) On Earth

Charles Hodge

With great joy, my wife and I watched our youngest son, Jerry, begin local work as a preacher. Local preaching is one of the most difficult jobs on earth. Having been a local preacher for nearly 40 years, I ought to know.

Yet, I am thrilled about my son's choice. Seeing my son working his way through ministry -- his first baptism, wedding, funeral -- has been exciting. Watching him decide, move, and grow is thrilling.

Two sermons, two or three classes, and a radio sermon to prepare are weekly chores. Many **sectarian** preachers preach once weekly. Others are given two months yearly to renew. We burn our preachers out. No preacher can have five "masterpieces" per week.

Following a Sunday night service, a member said to the preacher, "Aren't you glad today is over?" The haggard preacher replied: "Two more sermons!" -- Next Sunday was coming.

People become tired with the familiar. Even the Cosby TV show will age and die. People wish for the fresh and the new. Many preachers can dazzle an audience at the lectures annually; but to do it weekly is another matter.

Preachers literally change gears hourly. A baby is born; a member dies. Someone calls in happy, but the next caller chews him out. Preachers, daily, are put through the wringer.

Preachers are public. They are on duty 24 hours daily. Tragically, they are not allowed the privilege of being human. They are expected to be "Superman." They **preach** better than they live. Telling someone else how to live is one thing; knowing **you** are not very good at it is another.

Preaching changes daily. No two congregations are alike. Preaching includes the billy-goats. A preacher takes a job to help sheep. He spends most of his time wrestling billy-goats. Critics, murmurers, and grippers are included. Preaching school never prepared him for this! Brethren have

been petted, pampered and spoiled.

It can get mean down at church. A major crisis occurs in every congregation every 18 months. A shocking fact, yet true. About the time one heals, here comes another.

Preachers are responsible for attendance three times a week, contributions, responses, and every church work. (Tom Landry has only 16 games yearly, and then he can watch films!)

Because of all these things, Jesus "picked up the towel." Preaching is being a student and a servant. The greatest in the kingdom is the servant. One is most like Jesus when serving on his knees. Men fight for thrones but not for towels.

Preaching is the toughest job on earth. But it is also the greatest job! Will my son make it? He will if he stays on his knees.

--4020 Alicante, Fort Worth, TX 76133.

The Mission Of The Church

Melvin Wise

Everything worthwhile has a purpose, a mission. The church of Jesus Christ is the greatest institution in all the world, and God has given it a mission -- to lead men in the way of salvation. This is its chief mission and all others are subservient to this. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Colossians 1:18), and the mission of the church is tantamount to his mission, which said that he came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

The Mission of the Church is Threefold:

1. To preach the gospel of Christ.

Paul taught that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). The church is the only God-ordained support of the gospel. The Lord called the seven churches of Asia "the seven candlesticks" (Revelation 1:20). A candlestick is to uphold light, and here is the true image of the church.

2. To strengthen and edify the members of the church. Baptized believers are to be taught what to do to keep saved (Matthew 28:20). Without this teaching, they might return "again to the weak and beggarly elements" of the world (Galatians 4:9). Jesus said; "No man, having put his hand to the

plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). So the church is to provide the teaching of God's word that the newborn babes in Christ may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18).

3. To do the work of Christian charity or benevolence. Jesus said: "For ye have the poor always with you" (Matthew 26:11). The early church was confronted with this problem. They did not try to avoid it, but faced up to it, and did something about it (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 11:17-30; Romans 15:25, 26).

--Walnut Hill Church, 10550 Marsh Lane, Dallas, TX 75229.

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 3

Which Translation?

Hilton Royster

There are so many different versions of the Bible that it becomes confusing about which one to use. Does it make any difference which version or translation of the Bible one uses?

Yes, I think it does make a difference which translation a person uses in his Bible study. There are many different translations or versions of the Bible on the market today. It seems as if a new one is marketed frequently. I think we all understand that the Bible was written originally in the Hebrew and Greek languages: the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. Therefore, if we are to read and understand the Bible, we must read it in a language that we can read and understand. We must also keep in mind that while the inspiration of God guided men to write the Bible, it did not guide the translators in translating the original language into the language of the people. Just because the word "Bible" appears on the cover of the book does not mean that what is written on the pages inside will be the word of God.

Some versions, such as the Living Bible, do not claim to be a translation, but a paraphrase. To "translate" means "To bear or change from one place, condition, etc., to another; to turn into one's own or another language;" while a "paraphrase" is, "A restatement of a text, passage, or work, giving the meaning in another form." In PARAPHRASING, the one doing the paraphrasing gives his own interpretation of the thing being paraphrased; while in TRANSLATING, the one doing the translating is to retain the same meaning of the original text.

We need to be careful how we read many of the modern versions of the Bible, for they do not teach the doctrine of the original text. Example: One version of the Bible says Jesus was born of a "young woman" instead of a "virgin." Now a "virgin" may be a "young woman;" but a "young woman" does not have to be a "virgin." This emphasizes the doctrine that is spreading throughout "Christendom," religion that Jesus was not born of a virgin. Those of us who hold sacred the teaching

of God's word know that the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is central to the teaching of the Bible.

Some modern versions actually use vulgar language. In one such version, Jesus is said to have told one person to "go to hell." I do not believe our Lord used this type of language, and I think we can see how this would encourage our young people (especially) to use rather loose language, if they read such language in the Bible.

My personal preference is the King James Version of the Bible. I believe it retains the original meaning of the text as well as any other versions. Also, the American Standard Version is another good translation. There are many other versions or translations that are acceptable to read and study

from.

I would not recommend, though, that the average Bible student use them as their only guide to studying God's word. I think some versions of the Bible can be used as a commentary, in the same manner that we would use any other commentary on the Bible. We must also remember that, while commentaries are helpful in studying the word of God, they are the works of men, and must be used carefully.

Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (King James Version). The key to understanding God's word is study, not the version alone of the Bible.

--7th & College, Mayfield, KY 42066.

If You're A Duck, Swim!

[Editor's note: The following parable by Charles Swindoll is practiced and down-to-earth. I wish to share it with our readers.]

"A group of animals decided to improve their general welfare by starting a school. The curriculum included swimming, running, climbing and flying. The duck, an excellent swimmer, was deficient in other areas, so he majored in climbing, running and flying, much to the detriment of his swimming. The rabbit, a superior runner, was forced to spend so much time in other classes that he soon lost much of his famed speed. The squirrel, who had been rated 'A' as a climber, dropped to a 'C' because his instructors spent hours trying to teach him to swim and fly. And the eagle was disciplined for soaring to the treetop when he had been told to learn how to climb, even though flying was most natural for him."

This parable painfully portrays what often happens in the church. We each have a gift. Our gifts differ. Some of us try to do so many things, we lose our effectiveness in our most gifted area. As a result, the body suffers.

Romans 12 exhorts us to use the gift we have. It shouldn't distress us that someone may do another thing better than we. If God made you a duck saint, you're a duck. Swim, friend, swim like mad. And don't get bent out of shape because you waddle when you run. Running isn't your thing. But, boy, can you ever swim!

Another thing: if you're an eagle saint, stop expecting squirrel saints to fly like you do, or rabbit saints to build the kind of nest you do. They're doing their own thing, using their own gift. Diversity of gifts makes the body effective."

--Quoted.

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Last Year, 1988



Winfred Clark

This brings us to the end of another year on our journey through this world. We have, by God's grace, been able to live, and to have so many manifold blessings poured out on us! We recognize their source as being from God (James 1:17).

We have been allowed to meet and associate with great and good people.

There have been those moments when our feet reached the mountain top; and there have been those moments when we have walked through the valley of despair.

We have heard the newborn cries, and we have watched the departure of some to the world beyond.

We have had numerous opportunities to learn and to grow.

We have prayed a number of times with good men who have lead us in our worship services. We have had the privilege to pray privately on so many occasions.

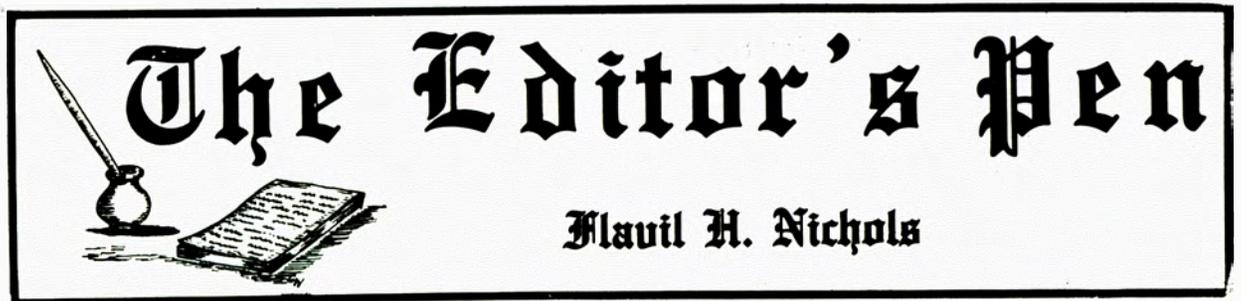
We have been able to raise our voices in praise to our God.

We have been encouraged to live better in many lessons.

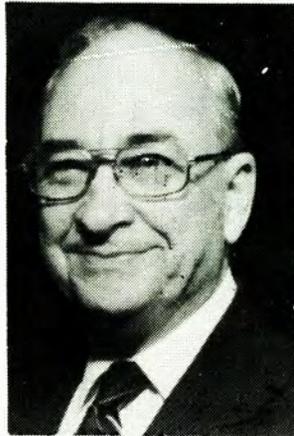
On and on we could go enumerating the tremendous opportunities that have been ours.

Now, looking back, let us hope that all of this has made us better and brought us closer to our Lord's side. For, after all, we are one year closer to our crossing the great expanse between life and eternity.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.



A New Testament Example Of Congregational Singing



Flavil H. Nichols

Our brethren have long insisted that, for a thing to be scriptural in the gospel age, it must be authorized in the New Testament. And we have rightly taught that there are three ways things are authorized: (1) by a command, or (2) by an approved example, or (3) by a necessary inference.

It astounded many of us to read several months ago that congregational singing is not authorized in the New Testament -- neither by command, nor example, nor by necessary inference! Don DeWelt, a leading preacher, writer, and educator, of the Congregational Christian Church, wrote to brother Guy N. Woods that "There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument." (*The Gospel Advocate*, May 16, 1985, p. 293). In the Highers-Blakeley debate, Given O. Blakeley insisted that there are no regulations in the New Testament regarding what to do in worship --absolutely no Bible authority exists, nor is needed! --for any thing we do in worship!

[This argument admits that there is no authority for the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church, but says in essence: 'So what? YOU SING without New Testament authority!' Those who use mechanical instruments of music have abandoned, by this argument, their former position --that such is scriptural. Now they admit that our opposition on the basis of the total absence of any New Testament authority for their practice is indeed factual! They thus surrender all attempts previously made to prove that instrumental music in the worship of the church is scriptural!]

If it were right to SING [and/or PLAY] without divine authority, why would it be wrong to count beads on a rosary in worship? On the same basis, why not handle rattlesnakes in worship?? Why not wash feet in worship??? On what basis could anyone object to ANY practice, even though it be not authorized???

But the doctrine that we do not need Bible authority for what we do in worship is absolutely

FALSE! For our Lord himself said that the doctrines and commandments of men make our worship "vain!" (Matthew 15:9). He requires not only that our worship be "in spirit" (rendered sincerely, from our hearts); but he also demands that each item of worship must be what is specified in the "truth," God's word (John 17:17), saying: "in spirit and IN TRUTH" (John 4:23-24).

We have previously shown that singing in corporate worship (when the church is assembled) is authorized by an apostolic command. Now we shall see that such congregational singing is authorized by an approved example in the New Testament.

1. When the apostle Paul wanted to teach the Corinthians how to properly observe the Lord's supper, he referred to the night it was instituted. He cited our Lord's example of eating the supper with them in that assembly (I Corinthians 11:17-30).

2. But that same night, "When they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Hence they (1) ate the Lord's supper, and (2) they sang, in the same assembly.

3. If it be right to appeal to that assembly as an approved example for proper communion in a congregation, it cannot be wrong to appeal to that same assembly as an approved example for singing in a congregation!

The Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul to refer to their EXAMPLE of eating the Lord's supper in that assembly as an EXAMPLE for Christians after the church was established --thus under the new covenant --to eat the Lord's supper in congregational worship. By the same logic, their SINGING in that assembly is an approved apostolic EXAMPLE for us to SING in congregational worship!

Bible students recognize that this occurred before the church was established. However, our Lord promised "my table" will be "in my kingdom" (Luke 22:29-30), which is the church (Matthew 16:18-19). He himself promised to "drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29), or "drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25). The same Lord who promised to commune with us in a "new" sense, also promised to SING with us in the assembly: "In the midst of the church (A.S.V.: "congregation") will I sing praise" (Hebrews 2:12).

Here then is a New Testament example of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Where Are The Nine

Yarbrough Leigh

"And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:12-19).

Of all the graces that give beauty to the human personality, perhaps none lends any greater beauty than does the grace of gratitude. It seems such a small thing; and yet, this Samaritan leper found an immortal place in the divine narrative simply because he returned to say, "Thank you."

Obviously, Luke thought it worthy of note that Jesus paid particular attention to the fact that this grateful one was a Samaritan. The one who might have been considered the least likely to express gratitude to the Lord was the only one who did so.

No people in the world have such good cause to be thankful as do Christians. Just think about it!

The Samaritan had been cleansed of his loathsome disease of leprosy; but we have been cleansed from the eternally destructive disease of sin! How infinitely greater and more beneficial is our cleansing as compared with his! David wrote, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalms 34:1). In the secret chambers of our hearts; in the family circle; in the midst of the congregation; in all places, and at every opportunity, the Christian should lift up heart and voice in thanksgiving unto God for his grace and mercy toward us!

Our Lord gave to that Samaritan a blessing which went forth from his person. He has given to us his own body on the cross! Jesus told his disciples,

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). God has given us his only Son, and the Son has freely given himself in order that we might be saved from our sins. Who is able adequately to express the thanksgiving which is due in response to such infinite love and mercy?

Ought we not to praise him, and offer to him thanksgiving for the church which, as scripture records, "he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28)? Time would fail us to speak of the thanks we owe to God for family, for friends, for material and spiritual blessings too numerous to count!

Shall we allow that Samaritan to be more grateful than are we, who have received so much?

--959 Alford Ave., Birmingham, AL 35226.

**A Gift Suggestion:
Subscribe To
Words Of Truth
For A Friend!**

The Best Definition Of Friendship

Bob Plunkett

A publication offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. Many, many definitions came in such as:

"One who multiplies joys, divides griefs."

"One who understands our silence."

"A volume of sympathy bound in clothes."

"One who knows all about you, and loves you just the same."

"One before whom one may think aloud."

"One to whom you do not have to explain."

"One that will pat you on the back and kick you in the pants."

But the award was given for this definition:

"One who stays when the whole world walks out."

One makes a lot of ACQUAINTANCES in life, but only a few FRIENDS who meet this description. Someone asked President Lincoln, "What is your definition of a friend?" He said, "One who has the same enemies you have." But Mr. Lincoln was joking, because he also said, "I am destroying my enemies by making friends of them." Another has said, "Some need a lot of new friends because they are cannibals who have eaten their old friends up." Others must have ever-renewed audiences before whom to re-enact an ideal version of their lives.

Jesus, more than any, fits the description of the prize-winning definition. The enemies of Jesus

unconsciously paid tribute to Jesus by saying, "He is a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matthew 11:19). He was the one who stayed, when all others walked out on the poor, the blind, the lepers and those possessed of demons. He demonstrated his friendship in helping people who could not help him: feeding people who were not able to feed him and healing people who could not heal him, in loving people who did not love him.

Perhaps the publication did not know it, but the greatest definition of friendship had already been given nearly two thousand years ago. "Greater

love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends," said Jesus to the disciples (John 15:13). Jesus surpassed this in his death upon the cross because there he died for his enemies also.

It's a good time of the year to be thankful for all of our wonderful friends. It is a time when we think tearfully and yet joyfully of our friends who have passed on. It's a good time to hug and say thank you and I love you to those who are here, but remember there is no friend like Jesus. Let us love him, praise him and serve him.

--E. Fourth St., Tuscumbia, AL.

Silence



Winfred Clark

The term silence or its equivalent is found often in your Bible. We often sing a song that has this word within it which is taken from Habakkuk 2:20. It is here that men are told to "keep silence before him." There is much more to that than just being quite in the assembly where God is worshiped.

Take a look at some cases of silence that may be either good or bad.

I. THERE IS A SILENCE THAT IS SUITABLE.

There are no doubt times when it is best to say nothing. Was this the case with the friends of Job? You know they came and sat with Job for seven days and "none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great" Job 2:13. It seems that the only fitting thing to do is just say nothing. They could however just be there to let him know of their concern and sympathy for him.

Isn't this the case when death occurs and we just go to be with those who have suffered the loss. No, we may not say a thing, but just being there is enough.

2. THERE IS A SILENCE THAT IS SELFISH.

Have there not been times when a word of thanks ought to have been uttered? Have there not been times when words of encouragement needed to be stated? Yet, there was not heard a single word. Wasn't this the case with those nine lepers that should have turned back to give thanks for their healing? Luke 17:17-18.

How many times have wives or husbands, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters failed to express the word of thanks that should have been expressed?

3. THERE IS A SILENCE THAT IS SINFUL.

Yes, there is a time to be silent; but there is also a time when such would be sinful. Wouldn't that be the case if you saw a person about to be killed but would not warn him? Wasn't there a time when the apostles were told to not speak or teach in the name of Jesus? Acts 4:18-19. Would it not be a sin for them to just say nothing? After all, they were compelled by the Lord's commandment to preach the gospel. To be silent in the face of threats would indeed be sinful!

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

A New Testament Example Of Congregational Singing

Continued From Page 2

SINGING in an assembly in connection with the Lord's supper.

But there is neither (1) a command, nor (2) an approved apostolic example, nor (3) a necessary inference to use mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church!

Growing A Great Church

Cleon Lyles

Ten attitudes and basic ingredients for growth:

1. **DESIRE** - You have to want the church to grow. It's not going to accidentally take place. You have to really want it to grow and be willing to pay the price.

2. **VISION** - Vision is being able to have a dream and goal to shoot at in church work.

3. **ATMOSPHERE** - We must be mood makers. The life of the church will be determined largely by the kind of mood that we set. The matter of friendliness and enthusiasm is critical.

4. **A STRONG PULPIT** - You cannot build a great church with a weak preacher. Average tenure in the 10 largest churches is 24 years. Your preacher's influence will broaden, year after year. There is a definite link between longevity of the preacher and the growth of the church.

5. **ACTION ORIENTED** - People have to be involved. Diversities of gifts make a healthy body. We must be more concerned about people than programs.

6. **UNITY** - Unity is absolutely essential. We can drift into discord, but unity has to be made.

7. **PLANNING AND SETTING GOALS** - We must be realistic . . . With definite goals in mind,

The Gospel According To You

There is the written "Gospel According to Matthew:"

One according to Mark, and Luke, and John, too;
There is another that many are reading:
It's the "Gospel According to YOU!"

All the teachings we find in the Bible
Are but facts we believe to be true.
You must live them to make the Gospel--
The "Gospel According To You!"

Every day you are writing your gospel!
In this life you may never know who
May be helped, or hindered, by reading
The "Gospel According To You!"

Many read the words --not the words in the Bible!

But I'll tell you what some of them do:
They read the 'Book' that you're writing
--The "Gospel According To You!"

"There's power in the minister's preaching,
So you say. And I believe that is very true:
Yet, the thing that may tell most on others
Is the "Gospel According To You!"

God help you in Christ to be faithful,
And to live all his teaching so true!
That all may be seeing his Spirit
In the "Gospel According to You!"
--Quoted.

we must outline procedures to reach those goals. Support of the church is essential.

8. **IMPORTANCE OF DELEGATION** - No delegation equals stagnation. We multiply ourselves by delegating responsibility.

9. **PRAISE** - If someone has done a good job,

praise will boost him on to a greater service.

10. **PERSISTENCE** - We must stay after it with no giving up. "Kites rise against the wind."
--101 W. Church St., Morrilton, AR 72110.

"Fearfully And Wonderfully Made"

Peggy T. Crump

Studies tell us there are 206 bones in the human body, more than half of these in the hands and feet. The thigh bone, which is hollow, is the strongest in the body. More than 650 muscles surround these bones and soft organs of the body. The ears can distinguish frequencies from zero to 20,000 HZ. The brain has 10 billion nerve cells and can record over 86 billion bits of information daily. The eyes can distinguish millions of shades of color. Each lung is filled with 300 million tiny air sacs called alveolus. If flattened they would cover 1,000 square feet, the area of three boxing rings. One drop of blood no bigger than the letter a contains 5,000,000 red cells and 5,000 white cells. We are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made"!! (Psalms 139:14).

The human body was divinely created (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7). We did not just happen (Psalms 100:3; 95:1-7). This body has "many members" (Romans 12:4), but each is subject to the mind or head. The head must do its work through its members. All members are important -- no matter how small (I Corinthians 12:14-26). We must take care of each one. All members go the same direction, working the same work which the mind (or head) has told them to do, although each does a different thing.

If a member gets sick or injured, all others cooperate to help it. The life of our body is in the blood. Any member cut off from this blood becomes sick and/or dies.

The church is made up like our bodies. It consists of many members which cannot rule themselves. Therefore we are subject to Christ, the head (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23).

The head must do all its work through the members, carrying the gospel message to others. Each member of this body is also important, as each must work and go the same direction (I Corinthians 12:13-30), but not all do the same work (Romans 12:4-8).

If one member becomes weak or spiritually sick, other members are to help restore him (Galatians 6:1-2; Romans 14:1; James 5:1-20). The life of the church lies in the blood, the blood of Christ (Colossians 1:13-14; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:2; Revelation 1:5; Hebrews 9:14).

The members of our bodies exalt the head to the highest pinnacle. So should church members exalt Christ to the highest possible height (Colossians 1:18). We should trust our spiritual head to lead his spiritual body, just as we trust our minds to lead our physical body. Christ will then lead us by the Holy Spirit through his written word (I Corinthians 2:13; Romans 1:16; 8:9; II Thessalonians 2:14).

Yes, our physical bodies are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalms 139:14). But the church or spiritual body is MORE wonderfully made because it was made by the MARVELOUS GRACE of God! His Son gave his physical life for our spiritual (John 3:16).

--Rt. 11 Box 454-B27, Gadsden, Alabama 35903.

True Riches

Arnold Sexton

It is a truism to say that we live in a land of affluence. Perhaps no nation has ever prospered so much and has been blessed so well. Materialism has become the heart of the thinking of government, industry, business, and even the family. The goal of most people seems to be wealth, independence, and ease.

The apostle Paul warns against this mentality by telling people to "flee" from this thinking, and to pursue more noble aspirations in life. Please observe studiously his words in modern parlance: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (I Timothy 6:10-11).

It is interesting to observe the contrast Paul made

between materialism and the principles which are classified as "true riches." H. W. Beecher made the following thought-provoking observation:

"No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning to his ledger. --It is the heart that makes a man rich. --He is rich according to what he IS, not according to what he HAS."

Heart riches are what the Lord had in mind when he said:

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroys and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21, R.S.V.).

Heart riches are "true riches." Let us work toward laying up more!

--P.O. Box 345, Mablevale, Little Rock, AR 72103.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 1989

NUMBER 4

How And Why Are We Called To Be Saints?

Clifford Dixon

That man is "called" of God is found many times in our New Testament. In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul states that they were "called to be saints." In Ephesians 4:1 we are told to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." II Timothy 1:9 states God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling . . ." In I Peter 2:9 we are told that we are "called out of darkness into his marvelous light." II Peter 1:10 states that if we add the Christian graces we make our "calling and election sure."

The question is not whether we are called of God, but **HOW ARE WE CALLED OF GOD?** The answer to this comes from II Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." So man is called by the gospel. This is the reason it is stated, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). When we accept and obey the gospel, then we are the children of God (Galatians 3:26-27; Hebrews 5:8-9).

When we consider man's history of rejecting the commands of God, and in general has rebelled against the standard God has given we pose the question, **WHY DOES THE LORD CALL US?** Just why would he give us the opportunity to be saved by giving us the gospel that will save our souls if we with meekness will receive it? (James 1:21).

God needs the help of good men to show him and his will to the world. Paul stated that he and the apostles had "this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Corinthians 4:7). God had angels to be his messengers; yet he chose that through men whom he inspired, the gospel be given to the world.

God has also passed down the task of teaching that gospel to the world, into the hands of men. Timothy was told that the things he received at the mouth of the apostle Paul, he was to commit "to faithful men," who would teach others also (II Timothy 2:2). If you will check out your New Testament cases of conversion, you will find every time a man was told what to do to be saved, he was always told by another man. Never did an angel tell anyone what to do to be saved. Never did God reveal what to do to be saved in a vision, nor in a dream. Angels, visions, and dreams had their part during the formative days of the gospel; but the message of salvation was always delivered by men. You see, God has chosen that "by the foolishness of preaching" men believe (I Corinthians 1:21). God still needs good men who will "live soberly, righteously, and godly," to preach the gospel to the lost world (Titus 2:11-12). He needs men who are "rocks" like Peter, who said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). He needs committed men like Paul -- men who "live by faith," and who are "set for the defence of the gospel" (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:17). God needs disciples who are faithful like John, who at an old age was exiled to Patmos, but he was still "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). Yes, God still needs good men to represent him upon earth to their fellow men. Will you hear his call and obey it, so that you will also be one of these who teach others about God?

God has restoration of the human race in mind by giving humanity the gospel call. In Acts 3:21 we read that the heavens must keep Christ until "the restitution of all things." This restoration is not a physical restoration of the earth to a paradise as is taught in so many religions. This is rather a "restoration" of the soul to communion and fellowship with God. Jesus Christ brought this about by his death on the cross (Ephesians 2:16); but man must respond to the teaching of Christ in order to enjoy it. This restoration begins when we

heed the gospel call by being "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5), which means to believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). This restoration continues as we who are "risen with Christ" "seek those things which are above" (Colossians 3:1-16). The revamping of life comes when we put off sinful things and put on right things according to God's standard. If we stumble along the way, provision is made for us to repent, confess our faults, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I John 1:9-10). This restoration will be complete when we receive eternal life (Mark 10:30). A glorious resurrection of the righteous dead will mean that the corruptible will put on incorruption, the mortal shall have put on immortality, and death is no more (I Corinthians 15:53-54). The Lord will take such to meet him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The most important thing in life for any of us is to heed the call of God through the gospel. We need to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). If we do so, God will fill our needs and bless us eternally. There is a yearning in man for his Creator. Do not squash it down with worldly pursuits! Take time for the things of God before it is too late.

--Route 3, Box 62, Brewton, Alabama 36426.

WANTED:

We are searching for an associate minister to assist in pulpit, radio evangelism, personal work, youth work, and educational program. The ideal candidate should be sound in the faith, married, and a college graduate. Salary negotiable. Send resume to:

Elders, Sixth Avenue Church of Christ,
1501 Sixth Avenue,
Jasper, Alabama 35501

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor
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Where There Is No Vision

Glenn A. Posey

Solomon declared, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Must we stay small to please the Lord? Are we big enough to be big? The church has the biggest and most important job on the face of the earth.

"Little - IT IS" literally destroys evangelization. How big should a congregation be? "And the number of men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). We're to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) and "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Jesus "died for every man" (Hebrews 2:9) and he intends for his church to carry the gospel message of salvation to "every man." The WORLD needs the gospel!

Let us re-evaluate our thinking. Let us awaken to our task. Let us see what lies before. Church leaders must be like the children of Issachar, "which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (I Chronicles 12:32).

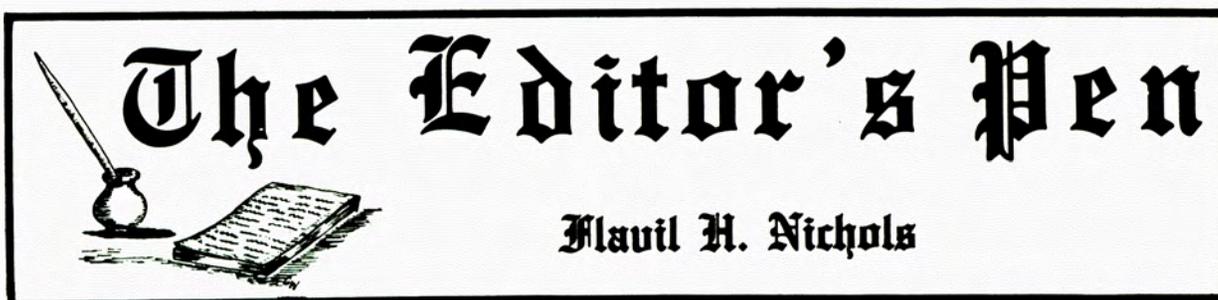
The church must get a vision of "every creature" and "all nations." We must purge ourselves of "little - it is." It is not unscriptural to be big. To BE big, we must THINK big - SEE big - PLAN big and ACT big!

The church, in my lifetime, has lost sight of the worth of "one soul." Listen to Jesus, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (Matthew 16:26; Luke 9:25).

Seeing what needs to be done, and what can be done, lies within the sight of those men who are entrusted with leadership. Dream! Open your eyes and look on the fields! Think BIG, plan BIG, and then act BIG!

Are we "big" enough to be BIG? The answer to that question is in VISION. Solomon is still right: "where there is no vision the people perish!"

--East Cullman Church, Cullman, AL.



Flavil H. Nichols

"I Will . . . Before I Die"



Flavil H. Nichols

Aged Jacob, whose name had been divinely changed to "Israel" (Genesis 32:28), had been deceived by his sons into believing that Joseph, his son by his beloved wife Rachel, was dead. He believed this lie for about 22 years. Being finally convinced of its falsity, he said: "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (Genesis 45:28). This also he did in the subsequent chapter.

Jacob made a great resolution! He said, "I will..." and did it! The Prodigal Son also resolved: "I will arise and go unto my father..." (Luke 15:18-19) and the next verse says that he did it!

Many have various good intentions, some of which are never carried out. Good resolves of heart are proper at any time. (The first of a year is not the only time one may wisely make good resolutions!) But they should also be executed, or put into practice. Solomon wrote: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed" (Ecclesiastes 5:4). This sounds like one is a "fool" in God's estimation if he does not live up to his commitments.

It does little good to say, "I will . . . before I die," but make no move to do what is purposed. Doubtless thousands have INTENDED to obey the gospel. Many perhaps have said to family or other friends: "I will be baptized . . . before I die," --but kept putting it off until it was too late!

Numerous Christians have told themselves (and perhaps others), "I will search the scriptures daily" like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11-12), but continually neglect to do so. They do not even attend the midweek services where they could vastly increase their knowledge of the word of God. Nor do they tune in gospel broadcasts, by which they could "grow in knowledge" (II Peter 3:18). Yet they may repeatedly say, "I will . . . before I die" --but neglect to do so.

As a New Year's resolution, some very likely said (either to themselves, or to their families), "I will start attending worship regularly --every Sunday," yet have failed to begin. The month of January is gone --and they have not yet enrolled in Bible classes, nor attended on Sunday nights, nor even for Sunday morning worship. It does no good to say, "I will . . ." --so long as you WON'T!!!

Others have made good resolutions about their church contributions. The apostle Paul wrote that the Corinthians "were the first to make a

beginning" (II Corinthians 8:10, A.S.V.) regarding the collection for the poor saints in Judea. According to the King James Version he said, "This is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago" (II Corinthians 9:2). Hence they PURPOSED ahead, and PROMISED a year in advance what they would do. Paul spoke of it as "your aforepromised bounty" (verse 5, A.S.V.). He later wrote them: "Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have" (II Corinthians 8:11).

Remember Jesus said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). Due to increase in salary, many are able to give more than they could last year. Early in 1989 many saints no doubt have purposed to increase their giving, keeping their contributions proportionate to their income, and therefore maintaining their liberality. Such resolutions are good, and to promise (either orally, or on a "purpose-of-heart" card) certainly is in harmony with the texts cited above. But merely saying, "I will . . ." does not fulfill one's responsibility. It does no good unless such resolutions are carried out. I repeat Paul's admonition: Let there "be a performance also" (II Corinthians 8:11).

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1).

Abortion

Keith Clevenger

There are many important problems in our society today. One problem of grave proportions is the problem of abortion. To Christians, and many other decent and informed people, the problem of abortion is not only alarming, but infuriating.

I have read many articles and watched many television programs concerning this topic; and what I have learned shocks me. The number of abortions per year in the United States is at a staggering level. In 1972, 586,000 illegal abortions were performed. In 1988, 1,600,000 legal abortions were performed. We now have legalized the taking of innocent human life!

An even more horrible thought arises when one considers the new "abortion pill." If there were nearly two-million abortions in 1988 when one must go through a time-consuming operation, how many abortions will there be in 1995 when a woman can purchase a pill with which to abort her baby in the seclusion of her own home???

There is no way that an honest, informed person can deny that a fetus is a living being at the time it is dismembered and discarded. Within twenty-five

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Where Are You On The Music Question?

Paul Kidwell, Sr.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). These words, with companion passages, have been our trusted guide. The worship of God in song has been an occasion for demonstration of faith in the authority of the word of God. Through the years we have emphasized that worship to God must be just what he authorizes, or else it is "vain" worship (Matthew 15:9). We preached it. We debated the question with any who dared "go beyond that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:6, A.S.V.). The simple singing of praise to Jehovah with no "adornment" was as much an identifying mark of his people as any other single item.

Now there is divided thinking over "the music question." There are several groups to consider. Look at the following list. Other positions might be added, but these cover a major part of the "spectrum of thought."

1. Some believe all additions to the worship of Jehovah are sinful.
2. Some believe all **mechanical instruments in worship** are sinful.
3. Some believe it is sinful for US to add mechanical instruments to OUR worship but they are not sure it is wrong for the Christian Church to use such in THEIR worship.
4. Some believe we cannot add **mechanical instruments** of music to our worship, but we may add vocal imitations of such.
5. Some believe we cannot add either **mechanical instrumental music**, or vocal imitations of such to our worship in formal assemblies (they call this "corporate worship"); but that we can add vocal imitations of such (but not mechanical instruments) when we are not in a formal

Abortion

Continued From Page 2

days after conception, its heart starts beating. By thirty days, it has eyes, a mouth, kidneys, and a liver. By forty-five days, its first movements of limbs and body begin. And by sixty-three days it is responsive to touch, cold, light and pain. Even atheists must admit the existence of life in a being thus developed!

God said to the prophet Jeremiah: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee" (Jeremiah 1:5). Children are a gift from God! Does God want us to throw his gift away? Assuredly not!

The attitude of our society toward abortion is disturbing. Whatever happened to the days when people were expected to take responsibility for their actions? And to face the consequences? Current laws on abortion not only go against the laws of God but against our moral sense of personal responsibility.

No one has the right to throw away a gift from the Almighty! It is time our society examined itself, and repented of the evils of legalized abortion. It is time for Christians to do something about it! It is time we stand up and speak out against this type of open wickedness. Do we care enough to try?

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assembly.

6. Some believe it is permissible to do whatever we want to do in worship, and so they do. This group, which includes informed sectarians, must surely enjoy laughing at the inconsistency of those who SAY they are in group one, but attempt to embrace groups 3, 4, and 5.

Brethren, we are paddling downstream to real problems. If and when we see another debate on the music question, the "vocal band" will rise up to haunt us. If I were a supporter of mechanical instruments of music in the worship, I would make this offer. "We will give up the organ . . . if you will furnish us one of your 'vocal bands' for our worship."

There was a time when gospel preachers would immediately unite in support of the first proposition advanced. Give us a few more "Fellowship Facades," and we probably will hear some openly advance the idea that the Christian Church may worship as they see fit, and we had best mind our own business. This doesn't pose the

You Are Not Coming Back!!

Dean Fugett

A recent poll of 2024 high achieving students by Who's Who Among American High School Students revealed some disturbing attitudes. Although the use of drugs and alcohol is down among high-achieving teens, the attitude toward suicide reveals a serious ignorance of life and death.

Forty-five percent knew a teen who attempted or committed suicide. Thirty percent have considered suicide: Four percent have attempted suicide. Suicide is one of the top killers of today's teens! Why?

1. T.V., videos, and movies, in their portrayal of death as an escape, have contributed to the ignorance concerning the permanence of death. The stars "die" on the screen, or kill others; then, that star is seen alive in other presentations. The reality of death is buffered. A large number of movies presently portray the dead as "coming back," to "try again," or to influence someone or something that was going on. The "dead" are shown just "floating around." All these teach a false doctrine about death that is affecting the thinking of many people.

2. Modern theories and fantasies of reincarnation contribute to suicide. A present female movie/star who can't seem to tell the difference between her fantasy-roles in movies has now written her fantasies to influence other gullible minds. One Far East country with reincarnation as a major belief is experiencing a high suicide rate among young women in lower classes and difficult circumstances because they hope they will "come back" into a better lot. Reincarnation is false to the core. You are not coming back -- as a prince or a frog!!

3. Mental impressions of self-esteem, unrealistic goals, pressures of life, secular humanism, rebellion against religious restraints, fear of failure, influence of drugs, loneliness, and aimlessness --

problem for me that some have seen. The Christian Church is a denomination. It started in rebellion to the authority of God's word. It has much which completely mocks the Bible. Their worship is corrupt, but it simply fits the mold of an apostate group. Their basic sin is not instrumental music: Their rejection of the authority of God's word condemns them in MANY points. Some who persist in referring lovingly to the apostates would have us believe it is a simple matter of a difference of "opinion." Not so! It is rather a matter of basic Bible doctrine.

What we have preached through the years is true, not because we have preached it, nor because years have passed; it is true because it is the message of the Bible. No man, nor group, can worship Jehovah acceptably without Bible authority for such worship. We must do what God says, in the way he says, for the purpose he states. The simplicity of this basic principle causes some to reject it. So it has ever been.

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all contribute to the problem.

Isaiah gave God's directive in Isaiah 8:19-20. Don't go to the fortune tellers, the spiritualists, the astrologers, the medium, those that would seek the counsel of the dead for the living. Go to the Law and the testimony. When people turn to other than the will of God, and take counsel from other than "the word," it is "because there is no light in them" (verse 20).

The rich man of Luke 16 desired that Lazarus be sent back to testify to his brothers. The truth was given: There is no returning! Hear the covenant in force -- the law of God. If one will not hear these, he would not accept the truth from ANY source. When people WANT something, they will seek it from any source.

Parents, religious leaders, educational leaders must begin to aggressively offset this destructive doctrine without further delay. The doctrine of reincarnation is without any merit or foundation of evidence. Please spread the word. Whether one dies by accident, disease, violence, misuse of drugs, or suicide: YOU ARE NOT COMING BACK!

--Box 62, Cave City, AR 72521.

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Attitudes Toward God's Word



Kenneth L. Jones

God declared, "...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). This attitude we must possess if we desire God to look with favor upon us. We must realize our own inability and unworthiness, and bow in complete subjection to his will. His word is authoritative, and as children of God our attitude should be: "God said it, therefore I believe it; and that settles it"! With Samuel we must say, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (I Samuel 3:10). We must hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6), and desire to know all that God has said. Jesus said,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

How different is the attitude of some who set their own wisdom, judgment and values as the highest authority, and accept the Bible only as long as it agrees with them. And of others who accept as final authority the theories of modern science, and "interpret" (pervert!) the Scriptures in an effort to 'harmonize' them with these theories. As for the wisdom of men, the Bible says: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God . . ." (I Corinthians 1:20). "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

We should not feel ashamed of, nor apologize for,

God's word. It is "truth" (John 17:17) and will never be successfully contradicted. In every instance where the theories of men have contradicted the Bible, when the true facts were known the Bible has always-without exception-been vindicated. Worldly "science" has often changed, and will continue to change, its views because of its admittedly incomplete knowledge: but God's word is changeless because it is "truth" and was written by one who has all knowledge. Remember Christ said: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

God's word will never fail or pass away, but will judge us in the last day (Isaiah 55:11; Matthew 24:25; John 12:48). We pray that all may realize these truths, and manifest always the proper attitude.

--P.O. Box 118, Parrish, AL 35580.

Death -- As God Views It



Joe E. Galloway

Man, limited in so many ways, often does not see things as God sees them -- thus, as they really are! God told Samuel, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Not only is man limited by only seeing the outward appearance, he is also limited by time, seeing only that which is temporal. Paul wrote, "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 5:18). In the same verse he suggests that we can look at "the things which are not seen." Of course we may do this only by means of what God has revealed to us in the Bible!

Apart from what God has revealed, man tends to view death much differently than does God. We tend to think of the death of a good man as a horrible tragedy. We seem to consider only how much better it would be if this good person were still alive and were still a positive influence to his family, friends, and all with whom he would be in contact. In contrast, we often think it good when a wicked person dies, thinking that surely heaven rejoices. But, God does not view death as we view it!

The Death of the Wicked

God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked! When a wicked person dies his eternal doom is sealed. God does not want a single person to perish (II Peter 3:9), but wants all to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but

that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

The Death of the Righteous

The death of a faithful Christian is precious to God. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). The purpose of our being here on earth is to prepare for living with God eternally. We make such preparation by learning God's will and living by it to the best of our abilities. The "whole of man" is to "fear God, and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). When one has faithfully lived for the Lord, his death transfers him from this realm of preparation into the realm of being with the Lord, which is a far better situation (Philippians 1:23; II Corinthians 5:8). No wonder such a death is "precious" in God's sight! "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

Lessons For Us

First, since God views the death of the wicked as a tragedy, we need to do our best, not only to live righteously ourselves, but to teach and influence as many others as possible to be saved! James wrote, "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

All of us have opportunities to influence many toward salvation. We have our immediate families. Some Christians have husbands or wives who are not saved; with some it is a brother or a sister; and we have our children to bring up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). We must teach these loved family members, or arrange to have them taught. To not act on this need is to callously let them live and die without doing the most loving thing we can possibly do for them: to try to help them prepare for their eternal happiness!

We also have close friends, acquaintances at work, and neighbors who need salvation. As those saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-10), we are "debtors," as was Paul, to do our best to teach the gospel to all who are lost (Romans 1:14-15). One cannot have the "mind of Christ" (Philippians 2:5) and not be concerned for the salvation of all who are lost.

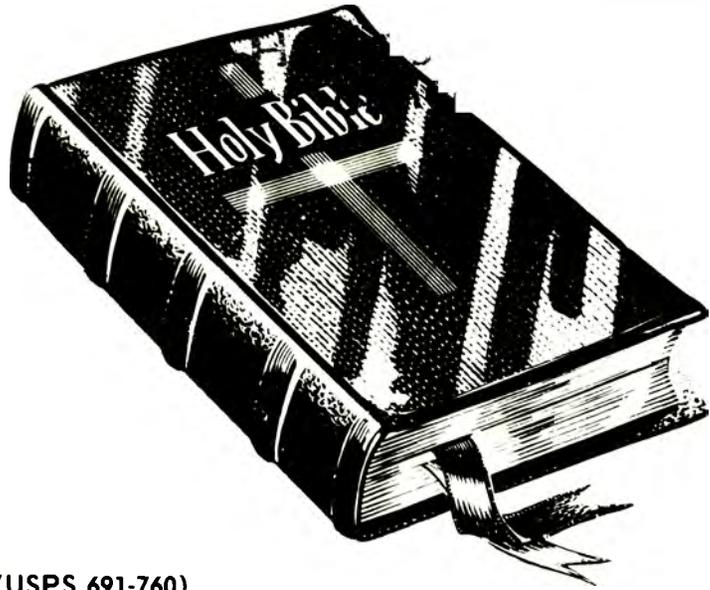
Second, since God has pleasure in the death of the righteous, we need to "rejoice in hope" (Romans 12:12) when a faithful Christian dies, even though we may grieve because of our separation from him at this time. Paul wrote, explaining the future hope of those in Christ, in order that Christians would "sorrow not, even as others who have no hope" when their beloved Christian friends die (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Finally, we need to look forward to that time when WE can depart this world to be with the Lord. Paul wrote, "For in this [body] we groan, EARNESTLY DESIRING to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (II Corinthians 5:2). As the faithful Christian grows older, and more and more of those whom he has loved dearly have died in the Lord, he will have less attachment to this life, and a growing desire for the life to come.

We all need to heed these words of Paul: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:2-4).

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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"Born Of The Spirit"



GUY F. HESTER

Jesus talked about the birth of the Spirit in his conversation with Nicodemus. "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except

God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:1-8).

It cannot be denied that in the process of becoming a child of God one is "born of the Spirit."

At first, Nicodemus did not understand. He thought Jesus was talking about a NATURAL birth. He asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

Jesus explained, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Thus it is the "spirit" (the invisible man) that experiences the birth of the Holy Spirit. Jesus used the wind to illustrate: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it

goeth: so is EVERY ONE that is born of the Spirit." Just as one cannot see the coming and going of the wind, neither can one see the spirit of man when it is born of the Holy Spirit into the kingdom of God.

Let us now look at another passage. Paul said, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). In other words, they have been born into God's family. Who are sons of God?

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God."

But how are we "led" by the Spirit? Are we led by a direct operation of the Spirit, separate (and apart) from the word of God? Or, are we led by the Spirit through the word of God? It is by the Spirit that we are "led!" It is by the Spirit that we are "born" again!

How does the Spirit "lead" us to become "sons of God"? Or, how does God's Holy Spirit cause man's spirit to be "born" into God's family?

The apostle Peter answers: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23). Since the Holy Spirit gave the word (John 14:26; 16:13; I Corinthians 2:9-13), when one is "born" (or "begotten," A.S.V.) by the "word," he is "born" (or, "begotten") of the Spirit.

In every birth there must be a begetting. Just how is one begotten so as to be born again? The apostle Paul gives us the answer: "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you THROUGH THE GOSPEL" (I CORINTHIANS 4:15). Just as in the natural (or fleshly) birth there is first a begetting, and then a bringing forth, so also in the spiritual "birth"; one is "begotten" by the gospel, the word of God; and is later brought forth from the waters of baptism -- thus, he is "born of water and of the Spirit."

Someone may ask, "Do you mean then that the word is the Spirit?" No, the word is the medium or instrument through which the Holy Spirit operates or works to produce the new birth today. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles "into all truth" (John 16:13). He taught them "all things" and brought "all things" to their remembrance that Jesus had said

unto them (John 14:26). Thus when one is led by the word as it was given by God's Holy Spirit to the apostles, and was written down in the New Testament, he is "LED OF THE SPIRIT;" and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

To further show that the word is the instrument through which the Spirit works, Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls IN OBEYING THE TRUTH through the Spirit. . . Being BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:22-23).

If the Holy Spirit operated miraculously upon the hearts (spirits) of sinners to being about the new birth, then ALL men would be saved without any condition on that part; or, else the Holy Spirit would be a respecter of persons -- because some are born again, and others are! Peter declared, "Of a truth I perceive that God is NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

When one believes in Christ with all his heart, when he repents of his sins, confessing Christ to be the Son of God, and is baptized for the remission of his sins, he then has been "born again, . . . born of water and of the Spirit."

Paul wrote to the Galatians brethren: "Ye are all the children have been baptized into Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). Paul said they were children of God after they had been baptized into Christ. One becomes a child of God through the new birth, and these Galatians became children of God when they were baptized.

Thus it is in water baptism of a penitent believer of the gospel that we have both elements of the new birth: "WATER and the SPIRIT."

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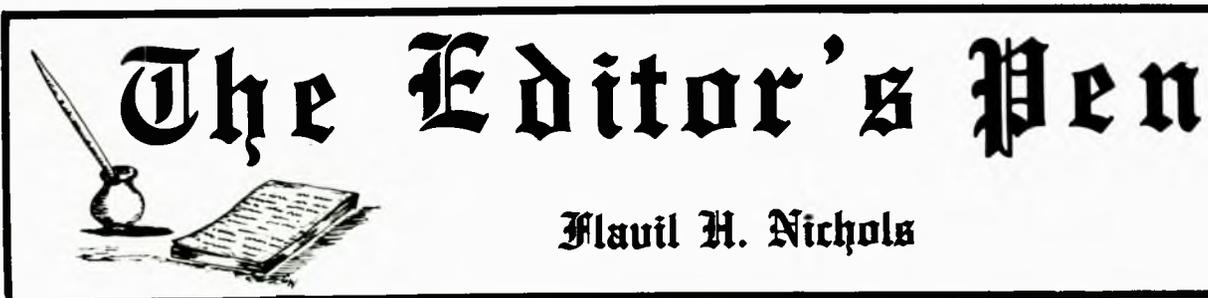
Born Again By The Word

Timothy E. Hester

There are many false theories being taught in the religious world concerning the Holy Spirit and the way in which he operates or does his work. The birth of the Spirit is one of the most popular subjects being talked about and written about today. In religious bookstores one may find any number of books such as: "How To Be Born Again", "A Born Again Christian", and many others. All who believe the Bible believe in the new birth. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). This statement was made to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who had come to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:1-2). Jesus said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Then as an explanation of this statement, showing that he was not talking about a physical birth, but a spiritual birth. Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). He further said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (Verse 7).

We must not close the Bible with Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus; we must look at other passages to get a complete understanding of the new birth. Paul said, "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" (II Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible serves as its own best commentary. We need not purchase a book from a religious bookstore to learn how to be born again. The Bible "thoroughly furnishes" us with this

Continued on page 4



Flavil H. Nichols

"Children Of God By Faith"



FLAVIL H. NICHOLS the inspired apostle declares that we are God's children "BY FAITH." Hence "FAITH" is essential to the new birth.

But, What Is "Faith?"

Our English word "FAITH" is translated from the Greek word (PISTEUO), which is defined as the "conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah, ...conjoined with obedience to Christ" (THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON, page 511). These three elements: (1) conviction, (2) joyful trust, and (3) obedience, constitute Bible "faith." Without either characteristic, it falls short of being "faith," in the New Testament sense. And without Bible "faith" one cannot become a child of God (Galatians 3:26).

(1) This "conviction that Jesus is the Christ" is produced by the facts recorded in the New Testament: his virgin birth, his sinless life, his teaching, his confirmation of his claims by indisputable miracles, climaxed by his resurrection the third day after he was officially declared dead. Honest inquires today --- like thousands in the book of Acts -- are forced to believe he is exactly what he claimed to be -- the Son of God.

2) "Joyful trust" results from our reliance on, and our confidence in Jesus as the Christ. We happily rely on the fact that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). He promises forgiveness of sins through his blood (Matthew 26:28), and a home in heaven hereafter (John 14:1-3). Christians rejoice in these glorious promises and prospects because of what Christ has done -- and is doing -- for us!

(3) But all the intellectual concurrence or mental assent in the world with the New Testament record will avail nothing, if we do not obey him. Jesus himself asked: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). He declared: "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" (Matthew 7:21). So, Bible "FAITH" involves not only "conviction" and "joyful trust," but these must be "conjoined with obedience."

By definition, nothing short of this is New

Testament "FAITH." This is the kind of "faith" by which we are children of God (Galatians 3:26).

HOW IS FAITH PRODUCED?

After our Savior prayed for his apostles, he then prayed for all "them also which shall believe on me THROUGH THEIR WORD" (John 17:20). The apostle Paul said, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The apostle Peter said that "the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7). The apostle John affirmed that the written word of God produces faith: " ... These are WRITTEN that ye might BELIEVE..." (John 20:30-31).

The noble Bereans BELIEVED because "they received the WORD with all readiness of mind, and searched the SCRIPTURES daily whether those things were so. THEREFORE MANY OF THEM BELIEVED. ..." (Acts 17:11-12). This also explains why Jesus, after he commanded the GOSPEL to be PREACHED in all the world to every creature, said: "he that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Man is "lost" because of his sins (Isaiah 59:1-2), and without the gospel he will remain "lost" in his sins: "For if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST..." (II CORINTHIANS 4:3). THEREFORE THE "GOSPEL OF CHRIST" IS CALLED "THE POWER OF GOD unto salvation to every one that BELIEVETH" (Romans 1:16).

Where there is no "seed," there can be no harvest. Since Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11), it follows that where there is no spiritual "seed" (the word), there can be no spiritual 'crop' of "children of God" produced by that "seed."

MUST BELIEVE TO BE SAVED

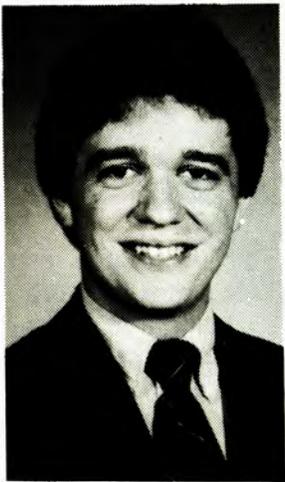
Powerful though it is, even the "gospel of Christ" will not save an unbeliever IN HIS UNBELIEF!!! The apostle says: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH..." (Romans 1:16). There is no power on earth that will save an unbeliever so long as he refuses to become a believer! Jesus himself affirmed: "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). He also declared: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The facts of the gospel will change an honest unbeliever into a believer, and then he can become a child of God "by faith."

CHILDREN OF GOD "BY FAITH" --
WHERE?

The new birth, which is "by faith" (Galatians 3:26) makes us "children of God" --where? "In Christ Jesus." In the Greek, the phrase translated "in Christ Jesus" is "locative" -- that is, it "locates" where this benefit is obtained. In the Revised Standard Version this passage reads: "For in Christ

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"Born Of Water . . ."



David W. Hester

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In this passage, Jesus told Nicodemus the terms of admission into the kingdom. The elements of this birth are water and the Spirit; and a man must be born of both to be born again. Please notice, though, that Jesus said one must be "born of

water." Much speculation has centered upon this phrase; and men have twisted its meaning to fit their own theories. What does God's word say about the subject?

First, one must see what the Savior does NOT mean. Contrary to the teaching of many, Jesus is not speaking of the physical birth. This position is widely held in the denominational world, albeit sincerely. If this be true, then Jesus is not saying that water baptism is essential for entrance into the kingdom. However, a simple reading of the context refutes this view. Nicodemus asked Christ, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born" (John 3:4)? This inquisitive Pharisee thought that the new birth was of a physical nature. Jesus had said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). When Nicodemus asked his question in verse four, Jesus specified the elements involved -- "water" and "the Spirit."

Christ further said, "That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). This statement by Christ answered Nicodemus's question, "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus is referring to two different births in verse six. The new birth, which is spiritual, is nothing like the birth of flesh which Nicodemus had in mind in verse four.

Some denominationalists will actually claim that "water" in verse five is the "WATER" (or, AMNIOTIC FLUID) of natural birth. However, Jesus is speaking of a "man," not an unborn child. Christ further says that a man must be born "again." Jesus referred to natural birth as being "born of flesh" (verse six). Also, this erroneous view would make Jesus a babler. A spiritual birth, not physical, is what Christ is describing. The "water" involved is literal, not figurative.

Many compare the "water" of verse five to the "living water" of John 4:14, and try to say they both are figurative. This view is false. When Jesus used the word "WATER" figuratively, he used an adjective to modify it, calling it "LIVING water." But there is no such modifier in John 3:5. Jesus says simply, "water," not "THE water."

Many contend that one must "get religion" at one point, and then be baptized with the Spirit, and subsequently be baptized again in water. This theory requires two births where there should be

but one. The language is "born again," not "again AND again" -- not once at the altar, and once more at the baptistry! Note also that Jesus said: "born of water and the Spirit" -- not vice versa.

What does Christ mean when he says, "born of water?" The answer is simple. He is referring to the act of baptism. Baptism is the means by which one is immersed in, and delivered from, water, according to the teaching of the Spirit: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him" (Colossians 2:12). Romans 6:3-6 describes how a man contacts the benefits of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ -- by baptism! Paul also writes that "our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

The same apostle also describes how Jesus sanctifies and cleanses the church through the "washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26). The Hebrews writer exhorts, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

The essentiality of baptism for man's salvation shines forth from the pages of the New Testament. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Contrary to the opinion of many, Saul was not saved on the Damascus road. The Lord told him, "Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). When Saul was come into Damascus, after three days

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Repentance Is "Unto Life"

KENNETH L. JONES

Repentance is an integral part of the new birth. One "must" be born again to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5). The kingdom of God and the church are one and the same (Matthew 16:18-19). Only the saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47). All things essential to salvation are therefore necessarily involved in the process of being born again.

The Scriptures clearly teach that repentance is a prerequisite to salvation. God has two laws of pardon: one for the alien sinner (Acts 2:36-38), and one for the erring child of God (Acts 8:16-24). Repentance is required in both; but this article is primarily concerned with repentance as it relates to one's salvation from past sins and entrance into the family of God by the new birth.

REPENTANCE IS "UNTO LIFE"

After Peter had rehearsed the events surrounding the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the brethren at Jerusalem ". . . held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life:" (Acts 11:18). Therefore, before one can experience the new life which follows the new birth, he must repent. God "granted" repentance to the Gentiles in that he furnished the sacrifice (Jesus Christ), and the plan (the gospel), and gave them the opportunity to repent.

REMISSION OF SINS IS PREDICATED UPON REPENTANCE

Jesus commissioned his apostles with these words: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all

nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). In this passage, repentance is used as a synecdoche for all which one must do to be saved, or to be born again. Peter faithfully carried out this commission on Pentecost by commanding believers to "REPENT and be baptized. . . for the remissions of sins" (Acts 2:38). One must repent to have his sins "blotted out" (Acts 3:19). In view of the coming judgment God now "commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30-31).

REPENTANCE DEFINED

Because of its imperative nature, a correct understanding of what repentance is becomes necessary. There are two Greek words translated *repentance* in the King James Version of the New Testament. They are: *METAMELOMAI* which means regret; and *METANOEO* which means a change of mind. The American Standard Version distinguishes between these two words, translating the first "regret", and the second, "repent" *METANOEO* when used of God simply means a change of mind; but when used in reference to man's repentance toward God, always means a change of mind, or will, that results in a transformation of life.

WHAT 'REPENTANCE' IS NOT:

(1). Repentance is not sorrow. One may be sorry for what he has done, without repentance. Herod "regretted" his command to have John beheaded (Mark 6:26); but he did not "Repent." (2). Repentance is not sorrow along with confession. Judas was sorry (*metameletheis*) that he betrayed Christ, and even confessed that he had betrayed "innocent blood" (Matthew 27:3); but he did not "repent."

(3). One may simply be sorry that he has been caught, or he may even be sorry concerning the consequences of his sins; but such sorrow is not "repentance." (4). Repentance is not GODLY SORROW. Paul wrote that "godly sorrow worketh repentance" (II Corinthians 7:10). If godly sorrow "works" (brings about) repentance, it is not repentance. (5). Repentance is not reformation of life. One may never again commit the sin, without ever really changing his mind about it. Reformation is a fruit, or result, of repentance. John said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). (6). Repentance is not restitution. But restitution (where possible) always follows genuine repentance. (7). And repentance is not forgiveness. Man repents; but God forgives.

WHAT "REPENTANCE" IS

Repentance is a change of mind (will) brought about by the goodness of God and godly sorrow (Romans 2:4; II Corinthians 7:10), and which results in a transformation of life (Matthew 3:8; 21:28-31) and *restitution where possible*. While the change in one's conduct is not repentance, it is the proof that repentance has taken place. If the conduct has not changed, it is evident that there has been no repentance. When one truly repents, he will do all within his power to correct the wrong, return all wrongfully-taken goods, and (if possible) make restitution for all losses and damages. One may say, "But I can't restore the stolen apple which I have eaten." That may be true, but

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Born Again By The Word

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information.

The inspired apostle Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the SPIRIT unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: **BEING BORN AGAIN**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **BY THE WORD OF GOD**, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:22-23). So now we have it from the pen of inspiration: we are **born again by the word**. Nothing could be more clearly stated.

But how does the Spirit work through the word in bringing about the new birth? The word is the "seed." In the spring of the year the farmer plants a seed of grain with the expectation of reproduction. God has put life in the seed to reproduce. Grain cannot be produced without the seed, because the reproductive life is in the seed. The reproductive life that God has put in the grain is the same to the

"Children Of God By Faith"

Continued from page 2

Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith." Not until one gets "into Christ" does he become a child of God "in Christ."

Read again: "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" (Galatians 3:26-27, King James Version). Herein the apostle Paul answers a series of questions:

Question 1: WHAT are you?

Answer: "Children of God."

Question 2: HOW did you become children of God?

Answer: "By faith."

Question 3: WHERE did you become children of God by faith?

Answer: "In Christ Jesus."

Question 4: WHY did you become children of God by faith?

Answer: Because "you were baptized into Jesus Christ."

Introducing the reason why they are children of God, by faith, in Christ, "For" (Galatians 3:27) is from the Greek word (GAR) of which Thayer says: "It adduces the Cause or gives the Reason of a preceding statement..." (Ibid, page 109). The apostle Paul had just written: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Then he used this Greek word (GAR), translated "For" (Galatians 3:27). The reason they are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus is because they have been baptized into Christ.

This harmonizes exactly with the definition of FAITH, from the Greek PISTEUO, (quoted at the beginning of this article): "...a conviction, full of joyful trust that Jesus is the Messiah, ...conjoined with obedience." In obeying the gospel, the Galatians, like Paul and the Romans, "by faith" had been "baptized INTO Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3). And because they are now "in Christ," they are children of God "by faith."

Unless "conjoined with obedience" CONVICTION and JOYFUL TRUST do not constitute Bible "FAITH." And without our obeying from the heart (Romans 6:16-18) "that form of doctrine" -- which includes being baptized into Jesus Christ (Romans (6:3), one is not a child of God "by faith in Christ."

Faith is essential to the new birth! Dear Reader, are YOU one of the "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus?"

_The Editor.

seed of grain that the Holy Spirit is to the word of God, which is the "seed" of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit gives life, regenerating, and reproductive power to the word of God. Jesus declared, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The word is the vehicle through or by which the Spirit operates.

What purpose could an independent operation of the Spirit serve? The Spirit does not save apart from the word -- "Who shall tell thee WORDS whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). Not to purify the soul -- "Seeing ye have purified your souls in OBEYING THE TRUTH" (I Peter 1:22). Not to "quicken" or make alive -- "It is the Spirit that quickeneth...the WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Not to sanctify -- "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy WORD is truth" (John 17:17). Not to give faith -- "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the WORD of God" (Romans 10:17). Not to convert -

Repentance Is "Unto Life"

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one can pay the rightful owner for what he has taken or destroyed. The law of Moses made very specific requirements concerning this principle (Numbers 5:6-8; Leviticus 6:1-7). The New Testament teaches it by example (II Peter 2:21; Luke 19:8-9; Acts 16:33). And Bible principles demand it (Matthew 22:37-39; 7:12; Hebrews 10:22).

Peter declared that Christians have been "born again" . . . by the word of God" (I Peter 1:23); and Christ explained that "the seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). When one hears the word and believes the gospel, he is thereby convicted of his sin, and becomes conscious of his lost and hopeless condition. The goodness and love of God

-- "The LAW OF THE LORD is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). By the same token, not to product the new birth --- "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **BY THE WORD OF GOD**, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23). To be born of the "Word" is to be born of the "Spirit" --- "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

When one receives the word of God into his heart, the "seed" is planted. The faith that the word of God produces in his heart leads him to be baptized for the remission of his sins. Thus he has been "begotten" of the Spirit, through the word of God, and has been baptized in water for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38) --- "Born of water and of the Spirit" by the word.

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extended him in providing forgiveness, and divine willingness to save him, produces godly sorrow, or remorse. This in turn results in a determination to cease the practice of sin, and to live in submission to God's will. One then is eager to confess Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, and to be baptized for the remission of his sins, completing the process of the new birth. He is then "born again" "born of water and of the Spirit," arising from the waters of baptism to walk in "newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). "All men everywhere" should "repent" (Acts 17:30)! for repentance is "unto life" (II Corinthians 7:10).

- P. O. Box 118, Parrish, AL 35580.

"Born Of Water . . ."

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Ananias came to him. To the persecutor of Christians, Ananias said: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

The same conditional relationship that existed between Naaman's leprosy and dipping seven times in the river Jordan (II Kings 5) exists between water baptism and man's salvation. Also, the children of Israel were commanded to look upon a brass serpent on a pole to be healed of poisonous snakebites (Numbers 21). Again, the same conditional relationship exists. Jesus commanded baptism; it is his way. He did the bleeding, suffering, and dying. He alone has the right to set the terms for the salvation of mankind. When the Lord says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," then one must comply in order to obtain citizenship.

A final consideration must be dealt with. Exactly what is "the kingdom" which Christ refers to in (John 3:5)? First, one must realize that "the kingdom" has been established. Jesus told a group of listeners, "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Some claim the kingdom is yet to come, and even try to pinpoint the day when Christ will come and set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem. If true, then let them deal with Christ's

own words, as recorded by Mark. Let them find those individuals present when Jesus made that statement! They would be over 1950 years old! When Jesus spoke of "the kingdom" he equated it with his "church." In Matthew 16:18 Christ said he would build his "church;" the next verse records that Jesus would give Peter the keys of "the kingdom." Clearly, they are the same. John said that he was "in the kingdom" (Revelation 1:9). To be in the kingdom-church is to be in Christ. Christ is king of his "kingdom," and he is the "head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). Salvation is found only in Christ. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, and they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10). "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life in his Son" (I John 5:11). When one becomes a Christian, he is added to the kingdom-church at the same time. "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" (Galatians 3:26-27).

The Savior's command to be "born of water" must not be overlooked, nor taken lightly. If man wishes to receive eternal life in heaven, he must trust and obey. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). He makes the "new birth" -- a birth of "water and of the Spirit" -- essential to our salvation!

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—ACTS 26:25

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Review Of Billy Graham's "How To Be Born Again"

L. T. Gurganus, Jr.

This 219-page book by Mr. Graham is well written, full of interesting stories and illustrations. It even gets to the heart of the gospel by emphasizing God's love, his sending Jesus to die for us on the cross and Jesus' burial and resurrection. He emphasizes the absolute necessity of faith in the deity of Christ, and faith in the Bible. All these points he clearly teaches by quotations from the Bible itself. For example, on page 205 he says, "The only reason our sins can be forgiven is because Jesus paid their full penalty on the cross." For emphasizing these great truths we are thankful.

In the preface (page 10), and in the conclusion (page 219), he calls the new birth the "most important subject in the entire world." He also presents the case for the NEED of the new birth as well as anyone could. With all these good points, you might ask, "What could be wrong with the book?"

IN SHORT, HE DOES NOT TELL A PERSON HOW TO BE BORN AGAIN!!! On page 8 he promises to answer the question. On page 12 he is concerned to make the book practical -- to show people how to be born again. Then he complicates matters by saying on page 11 "This new birth happens in all kinds of ways." Throughout the book he tells interesting stories of people who have changed their lives -- and attributes all of them to the "New Birth."

Since he claims that God led him to write the book (page 12), we would expect him to give God's answer to the question of how to be born again. BUT HE DOES NOT!! On page 138, and again on page 156, he says, "Salvation is by Christ alone through faith alone . . ." Then on page 186 he says, "All you have to do to be born again is to repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. You don't clean up, give up, or turn around yourself; you just come as you are." But he fails to give the scripture for this - MAINLY BECAUSE THERE ISN'T ONE!!

On page 8 Mr. Graham quotes John 3:3 "I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." On page 161 he refers to Nicodemus as "the same religious leader who had

asked Jesus how to be born again." The very title of his book comes from this verse -- John 3:4. He also refers to the necessity of the new birth in John 3:7 (page 176). Since he also refers to verse 16, he is obviously very much aware of the contents of John chapter three. Now note this carefully: In John 3:3 Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In verse 4 Nicodemus asks Jesus "HOW?" which is a very logical question. Jesus ANSWERED that question in VERSE 5. Yet Mr. Graham wrote a 219-page book on "How to be born again" and NEVER EVEN ONCE quotes, nor even refers to, this verse which is Jesus's own SPECIFIC ANSWER TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTION OF HOW!

Yes John 3:5 is missing from Mr. Graham's book; but it is still IN YOUR BIBLE!! It still says: "Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

On page 182 he refers to the conversion of the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost as follows: "On the day of Pentecost a dramatic change occurred in three thousand people who were born again. In the morning they were lost, uncertain about the purpose of life, many of them guilty over the death of Christ. Others were afraid of either the secular or religious authorities. But at the end of the day they had been born into the kingdom of God." This quote is true, as a reading of Acts 2 will show.

Note that Mr. Graham admits that the 3,000 were born again. What he did not tell you is HOW, although this chapter plainly does! When accused by Peter of killing the Son of God, the crowd asked: "Men and brethren what shall we do?" (verse 37). Peter answered: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (verse 38). In verse 40 Peter exhorts them to "save yourselves." In verse 41 we read: "They that gladly received his word were baptized . . ." The 3,000 repented and were

baptized. And even Mr. Graham admits they were "born again" that day. Here is a plain Bible statement of what people did in order to be "born again;" but Mr. Graham did not say that in his book. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and from then on, in every case of conversion the people believed the gospel, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of their sins. Thus they were "born again," "born of water and of the Spirit." But Mr. Graham LEAVES OUT John 3:5; Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 22:16; Acts 16:32-34; and many other passages that tell how to be born again.

In the whole book he NEVER DOES tell what the people did in order to be "born again." Why did he not? Not because of sincere ignorance of what the Bible says! He surely is well aware of these verses. Why did he take away from the word of God this way? I do not know.

Mr. Graham seems to be (justifiably) proud of his record of honesty and integrity in handling the finances of his "ministry" without scandal. I wish he would be as honest in telling people what the Bible says on "How To Be Born Again!" You can learn how to be born again from THE BOOK - THE BIBLE -- but not from Mr. Graham's book.

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-Acts 26:25

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Are You In God's Family Or Satan's?



W. A. Holley

We earnestly ask our readers to answer the question, "Are you in God's Family, or in Satan's Family?" as honestly as possible. Let your answer be based upon the teaching of your Bible. Our appeal must always be: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in

them" (Isaiah 8:20; Cf. Luke 16:29-31).

Verily, God has set up his own measuring standard which determines what is right, and what is wrong (Isaiah 34:16-17). Jesus spake of a special relationship when he said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). One is "against" Jesus when one rebels against his teaching (Matthew 7:21-23; Revelation 22:14).

According to Jesus, Satan is the "father" (John 8:44) of the devil's children. Moreover, "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil. . ." (Matthew 13:38-39). Jesus, addressing some unbelieving Jews, said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Satan's children possess his nature, and his desires, and seek to do his will.

One's daily life declares whether one is a child of God, or a child of the devil: "In this the children of

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The Law Of Silence: Some Reflections

Jackie M. Stearsman

Much is being written and articulated today relative to the principle of silence in Biblical interpretation. There is the proposal by some to develop a new hermeneutic whereby those practicing that which is unlawful (worshiping with mechanical instruments of music) might some way or somehow be given legitimacy.

There are those who assert that this is nothing more than a few hard-hearted legalists in the churches of Christ who promote division and oppose unity. Consider the following from a writer of the Christian Church:

"If 'the law of silence' is a valid one, where do we place it in our Bible? And, pray tell, how would we set it forth, since it is a silent law? To what portion of God's Word would this law of man be added? If such a law is not from God, and cannot truly be attributed to Scripture, how dare anyone presumptuously proclaim it, and thereby judge those whom God has received?" (Gwen O. Blakeley, Editor, *Banner of Truth*, June 1988, p. 77).

Men Obey The Law Of Silence Daily

Those who oppose the law of silence in religious matters recognize and use it on a daily basis. They know that the law of silence is implied in the principle of authorization.

(1) We expect doctors to practice it. When a doctor writes a prescription and sends it to be filled we know that he is not authorizing all that he has not explicitly forbidden.

Would we appreciate doctors charging us for what they did not do? Would we consider them acting properly should they reply, "You did not tell me not to charge you for the surgery which I did not perform."

(2) We demand that our pharmacist recognize the law of silence when he fills the prescription authorized by our doctor. Does he have the freedom to go beyond what is written? He, the doctor, and we (the patient) all know that he is authorized to include only what has been ordered, and that he must exclude (by the law of silence) all that is not authorized?

(3) Officials in law enforcement recognize the law of silence, and they are correct in expecting those of us in society to honor the law of silence. When the speed limit is posted at 65 mph this means that we are permitted to drive on that road up to that speed.

Society recognizes the law of silence and would not be so foolish as to quibble when stopped for exceeding the limit by 20 mph saying, "it does not say "Do not go 85!"

(4) Those involved in business transactions recognize the law of silence. If you order an item by mail you have a right to expect only what you have ordered. Those you are doing business with may not, without your consent, alter your order.

When you go to McDonald's and place an order for a hamburger and fries, do they bring you everything they sell? or do they honor the law of

silence, limiting themselves to what you authorized?

Who would do business with any merchant who filled your order as some people practice religion - that whatever is not explicitly forbidden is ordered?

Chaos would result in the business world as it does in the religious world should men ignore the law of silence!

The Bible Demands That We Obey The Law Of Silence

The Bible does not expect a special religious sense (perhaps 'nonsense' would be the better concept) when it directs its readers in the ways of God.

(1) Those who sought to bind **circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses** upon the early Christians were acting without authorization, were not respecting the law of silence.

The apostles, Christ's authorized spokesmen, met with brethren and placed in writing for all to read, that anyone acting without authority was wrong. *"Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24).*

(2) The priesthood of Christ is confirmed by the law of silence. From the Old Testament the inspired writer of Hebrews argued for the change of law and the change of the priesthood. The Messiah was to be from the tribe of Judah and was to be after the order of Melchizedek. Levites alone could be priests under the Law. Therefore, if Christ is to be priest, the law must be changed. The law of silence was a strong point in the argument.

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:12-16).

(3) The law of silence is used to prove the **preeminence of the Christ over angels**. He is shown to be above the angels, for God called him his Son and did not so designate any of the angels. *"Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God*

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Are You In God's Family Or Satan's?

Continued From Page 2

God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (I John 3:10). Hence, if the children of Satan pray to their "father," they pray to the devil! Only the children of God can rightly address God as our "Father." God has no children outside his family.

In the Bible sense, one's "house" is one's FAMILY. For example, Joshua said, ". . . As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Hence, Joshua's "house" was his "family." Again: "Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his HOUSE . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). Thus, Noah's "house" was his "family."

As strange as it may seem to some, the Lord's "family" or "house" is his church. How do we know? We read: ". . . That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the HOUSE of God, which is the CHURCH of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). Those who hear, believe, and obey the truth of God, are added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). The Lord never makes a mistake by adding people to the wrong church!! [Verily, denominationalism did not exist in the Apostolic Age!!].

Ephesians 2:12-22 needs to be read. Jews and Gentiles become one in Christ: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (verses 19-22). To be in the "world" is to be lost; to be in Christ -- in his body -- his church is to be saved (Ephesians 1:3, 22-23; 4:4-6; 5:22-25).

The church of Christ is a "spiritual house" (I Peter 2:5, 9). Jesus is head "over his own house" (Hebrews 3:5-6), which is the Lord's CHURCH (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:18). Jesus is the Saviour of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Hence, if one is to be saved, one must be in the Lord's church. The 'non-essential' church is no where to be found in the Bible! One cannot be "in Christ" and "out of the church" (Matthew 16:18-19). The kingdom and church, in the passage cited, refers to the same institution.

How does one get into the Lord's church, or "family?" It is simple, indeed. One "must be born again," "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3, 5). These two verses reads as follows: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Verse 3). To explain further to Nicodemus, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (verse 5).

From these two passages we should learn that there is but one birth, with two elements: "water" and "the Spirit." Both of the elements are essential to the new birth, and to entering into "the kingdom" or church.

What is the new birth? Since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, it follows that whatever one must do to be saved (or, to obtain remission of sins), equals "being born of water and of the Spirit." When one believes, repents of his

sins, confesses Jesus' name before men, and is baptized into Christ for remission of sins, one has been "born of water and of the Spirit." Jesus stated it thus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Peter answered the question: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" with these words: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38).

Many preachers have worked hard to eliminate WATER from the new birth; but that would eliminate being "born of water," and violate the teaching of God's word (Galatians 1:6-10; Revelation 22:18-19). Such efforts spring from doctrinal prejudice as found in the denominational

world. Denominational preachers will try any deception by artifice or subterfuge in order to conceal or evade the truth of God. Do not listen to preachers, but turn to the word of God (Acts 17:11).

One becomes a "new creature" "in Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17). How is this wonderful act accomplished? It is when one obeys the truth of God (I Peter 1:22-25). What is included? Faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33), and baptism in water, for remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38).

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. . ." To which family do you belong?

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The Law Of Silence: Some Reflections

Continued From Page 2

worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Hebrews 1:4-8).

CONCLUSION

There is no need for a new hermeneutic. We only need to be as serious and honest in religion as we are in business, medicine, and the laws of our highway to resolve religious confusion.

"They know that the law of silence is implied in the principle of authorization."

Men who do not practice the principle of authorization and honor the law of silence, do so not because it cannot be understood or implicated.

If we took liberty with the words of the editor cited above, going beyond what he has explicitly

stated or implied, treat his words as he treats the Bible, we have no doubt that he would need no special education to discover the law of silence. No, daily, rational people demand of themselves (as well as others) that all recognize and apply this principle.

When the principle of silence is not honored, it indicates that the problem is much greater. Only good and honest hearts may be expected to do what is authorized, whether it be in medicine, business, law enforcement, and yes, also in religion. **"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).**

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Do It Now!

B. G. Langston

[Brother Bob Langston has preached at Cape Fear church, Fayetteville, N.C., for about a quarter of a century. From his bulletin I gleaned the following article, the title of which I have supplied. --Editor].

Who among us has not been guilty of living as if we wonder when life is going to begin? We are not always certain WHAT it is that we are waiting for, but we persist in waiting till LIFE slips by -- leaving us waiting for something that has been going on all the time.

Fathers are waiting until their work is less demanding; then they are going to get acquainted with their sons. But one day the sons are grown and gone --and the best years for knowing them are gone, too!

Mothers are going to be more attentive to their daughters, and be more companionable --sit down with them, and talk; yes, even tease and have a little fun with them as though they were glad the daughters are around. But time passes, and distances widen, and one day the daughters are gone!

Men and women are going to give serious thought to eternity "some day." There is no reason to doubt these good intentions.

But when are we going to live as if we realized that THIS IS LIFE??? This is our time! This is what we came here for, whether we are thrilled, or disappointed, or happy, or bored.' This is Life!

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Nadab And Abihu



R. W. Gray

"And Nadab and Abihu . . . took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

A brother writes that he has, after many years of misunderstanding the account of God's wrath kindled against these sons of Aaron upon the inauguration day at the new tabernacle, finally identified their sin. It was, so he states, the sin of intoxication, to which the inspired writer refers in Leviticus 10:9. He thus reasons that the familiar account of these disobedient priests should not be cited as an example of offering unauthorized rites in worship, but that it may be cited only as a prohibition against drunkenness when appearing before God.

In response, may we not recognize the possibility of "implied" intoxication as a background for the greater sin for which these men were punished? But, at best, it is an assumption; as the record does not state -- neither by "necessary implication;" nor by direct statement -- that these priests were intoxicated when they offered "strange fire" before the Lord.

When we "assume," however, that Nadab and Abihu had imbibed wine to the point of losing their senses, we have not yet answered the stated cause for their punishment. The record states specifically that these men offered "strange fire" before the Lord, which he commanded them not." The very next statement in context is that as a consequence, fire went out from the Lord and devoured them (Leviticus 10:2). One translation renders verse 1: "and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command." The A.S.V. has it that they "offered strange fire before Jehovah, fire which he had not prescribed for them." Neither strange fire nor strange incense would be tolerated by Jehovah by those who proposed to come before him in worship (Exodus 30:1-9).

That they should secure fire for their censers from a source unauthorized by Jehovah apparently must have seemed of little consequence to Nadab and Abihu. However, it obviously was a great thing in the eyes of the Lord! The 'law of exclusion' precluded their right to act presumptuously, or to assume that will worship, worship originating in finite minds apart from a divine warrant for such action, would be acceptable to Jehovah (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6). Every action in connection with their priestly functions was to be performed precisely "as the Lord commanded Moses" (Leviticus 9:10). Their crime was not in doing what Jehovah had specifically forbidden, but in doing what he had not enjoined.

The lesson of Nadab and Abihu is obvious. No man or body of men has any business attempting to decree rites, ceremonies, or any approach to

Jehovah in worship which he has not authorized in his written word. A fire of our own kindling or choice God will not approve. We cannot afford to trifle with his will, for God "will be sanctified in them that come nigh to him" (Leviticus 10:3). No wrath is more terrible than the wrath of him who "is a consuming fire" (Exodus 24:17; Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). We would doubtless be inclined to think a lesser penalty than immediate, violent death would be sufficient for such presumption but for the example of God's response, as herein revealed.

In an obvious effort to help father Aaron accept this tragedy, Moses stated immediately, "This is that that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Leviticus 10:3). Whatever else may have been included, Moses makes it plain that offering before God a strange fire was a violation of his previous instructions. God would be sanctified either by obedience or by the punishment of priests as they drew near unto him (Exodus 19:22). All who observed, including the bereaved father, Aaron, would witness the glory and power of Almighty God (Hebrews 12:28-29).

Following this event the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die" (Leviticus 10:8-9). In the following verse Jehovah implies that a clear head, free of all intoxication, would be necessary to an understanding of the difference between things holy and unholy, clean and

unclean. For whatever reason, whether by the cloud of intoxication, by determined self-will, or a combination of the two, Nadab and Abihu had not made such a distinction, and were therefore punished by death.

That intoxication was forbidden a priest in his priestly functions one cannot deny. And whether or not Nadab and Abihu were intoxicated one cannot determine absolutely. But one thing is certain. These priests died because of the crime of offering a strange fire before Jehovah which he commanded them not. From this conclusion there is no escape.

We --all Christians-- are serving in the capacity of priests, entering into the holiest by means of the blood of Christ. We are through him to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (I Peter 2:5, 9; Hebrews 10:19; 13:15). We serve our God in a greater tabernacle not made with hands, that which the Lord has pitched; and we must remember the example of God's consuming fire whenever we come before him in divine worship (Hebrews 9:11; 12:28-29). All we do as priests must be authorized by Christ. We dare not act in word or in deed without his directions (Colossians 3:16-17; 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-26). This is why we sing, offering the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to God through him (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15). We do not offer praise upon a mechanical instrument of music, as this would represent a "strange action" before the Lord.

--536 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.

Does The Bible Condemn Drinking Alcohol If You Do It "In Moderation"?

Bob Prichard

While very few people would question the fact that it is wrong to get drunk, many imagine that if you drink "in moderation," or not enough to get drunk, then there is nothing wrong with it.

While there is a difference in DEGREE, there is no difference in kind between the so-called "social drinker," and the drunkard. Whether the person drinks much, or little, he is impaired by the alcohol. Drinking "moderately" makes one "moderately drunk." God has never allowed "moderate" sin. Sin is sin in his sight.

The wise Solomon said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). He asks, "Who hath woe? who hath sorrows? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of the eyes?" Then he answers: "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs 23:29-32). Solomon vividly depicted one of the great dangers of consuming alcohol; it "bites like a serpent" in the end.

People drink for many reasons, including loneliness, pain, and failure -- although they may tell themselves they just want to have a "good time." But the problems that the drinker wants to forget may be overcome through Christ. Among the

Christians at Corinth were former drunkards. Paul wrote to them, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor DRUNKARDS, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Christianity can fill the void in people's lives, a void they often try to fill with alcohol. Paul writes, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein in excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18-19).

Many say that drinking is not really that bad, compared to other sins; but this does not excuse it in God's sight. The drunkard is classed with idolaters, fornicators, and thieves in God's sight. The millions of families devastated by the effects of alcohol testify to the fact that the use of alcohol, moderately or immoderately, is a serious sin.

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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"Walk As Children Of Light"

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

On numerous occasions, the apostle Paul mentioned in his letters to the various churches a BEFORE and an AFTER time of their lives. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators . . . nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: BUT ye are washed, BUT ye are sanctified, BUT ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11). "And you . . . who were dead in trespasses and sins: . . . ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air . . . had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mine; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. BUT GOD . . . when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . ." (Ephesians 2:1-5). "Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel . . . having no hope, and without God in the world . . . BUT NOW, IN CHRIST JESUS, ye . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:11-13). "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, BUT NOW ARE YE LIGHT IN THE LORD . . ." (Ephesians 5:6-8). The Colossians were admonished to "mortify . . . fornication, uncleanness, . . . for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked sometime, WHEN YE LIVED" (past tense!) "IN THEM" (Colossians 3:5-7). I Thessalonians 1:9 clearly shows that they had earlier ("THEN") served idols, BUT HAD "TURNED TO GOD . . . TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD" (NOW).

It appears very clear that there is definitely a difference in the way a Christian walks when

compared to the past life (then/now). In Ephesians 5:8 Paul declares, "WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT." Surely there is a declaration that a Christian (one who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God) needs to walk differently from one who is described as a child of disobedience.

Because the child of God has been bought with a price (the death of Christ on the cross), he is now "under new ownership." He belongs to Christ and to God. He is to walk as a child of light, to let his light "shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). One who realizes that he is now owned by another (changed from the domain of Satan to that of God) should concentrate his energies in pleasing the new owner.

Jesus said "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). John said "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). When do the commands of God seem to be grievous? When they conflict with that which I wish to do which is not according to the law of the Lord, and of necessity to my LONG TIME benefit! A quick fix in a dull day! When I forget that God loves and cares for me, and that truly, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). It's only when I lose sight of Jesus, as did Peter while walking on the sea, that his commandments seem too hard and grievous!

Because a Christian belongs to God, he IS commanded to "Love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Jesus proclaimed this in Matthew 6:33 when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Walking as children of light, as a child of God, one will of necessity love God supremely. He will put God first in all of his thoughts, words, and deeds. He will live among his family in such a way that God is glorified through his every action, his direction, and his decisions. It was said by God about

Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Genesis 18:19). This SHOULD be said of every Christian, man or woman. After all, if we walk as "children of light," isn't this what will happen???

When a person belongs to God, having been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13), he has a relationship with the people of God, in the kingdom of his dear Son! Because of this relationship, he must do many things. Some of them are hard, but are never impossible. God never expects the impossible of us! he has a responsibility to the eldership to "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17). Wives are to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22), and all are to "submit to God" (James 4:7). There is no shame and disadvantage to submitting, when the one submitted to has the love that God and Christ do for the church, and that a husband 'indeed' has for his wife. To fail to submit is to fail to obey God, whether it be that one fails to submit to the elders, to a husband, or to God! "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). Yes, even Christ submitted! Therefore, to submit is to be 'Christ-like.'

Another area of walking "as children of light" would be in one's daily living. A Christian is to be --and act like-- a "Christian" on the job, at school, on the lake, or in the woods, and even in the malls. On the job, one is enjoined to give a "good day's work for a good day's pay," or (as Paul would say), "in singleness of your heart . . . not with eyeservice, as menpleasers" and "to please them (in this case, the employer) well in all things; not

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Words Of Truth

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-Acts 26:25

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Paul In Athens



Winfred Clark

When we speak of Paul in Athens, we are not speaking of Athens, Alabama. We speak of Athens, Greece, where he stood before those who were given to idolatry. There he speaks of God and identifies himself as a believer in God. Notice carefully a statement he makes in Acts 17:24. "God

that made the world and all things therein, seeing that HE IS (emphasis mine) Lord of heaven and earth." Pay close attention to the fact that he says "HE IS." Of course, this speaks of his existence; but it also speaks of his activity and position.

1. Paul could well say, HE IS GREAT.

Surely the one who "made the world and all things therein" must be called great. His great power is surely demonstrated in the creation. When we consider the greatest feat of men, such as putting men on other planets, this is small indeed compared to the power and strength of God. When man arrived to set foot on the moon, he found a place that God had made.

God is not only great in his power, but he is great in his control. He is Lord, or ruler, of heaven and earth. There is thus no place beyond his control. Man is thus answerable to God everywhere.

2. Paul could well say, HE IS GOOD.

We learn from verse 25 that he is not only the source of life but also the sustainer. Again, it is in him that we live and have our being. We are reminded of the language of James when he speaks of every good and perfect gift being from above (James 1:17). Yes, Paul could well say that HE IS

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How To Attract New Members



Kenneth L. Jones

Christ asserted, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). He spoke of his crucifixion as a "lifting up," declared the necessity of his death (verse 34), and promised to "draw all men" unto himself. It was necessary for Christ to be "lifted up" as a sacrifice for sins (John 3:14). His crucifixion and resurrection also proved his identity as the promised Messiah, the Son of God (John 8:26-28). He destroyed the power of Satan by his death and resurrection (John 12:31-32; Hebrews 2:14). Having now been raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand (Acts 2:32-26), and having been given all authority (Matthew 28:18), he now draws men through the gospel (Romans 1:16).

Many gimmicks and methods of men have been employed to gain followers. However preaching the gospel of Christ, and the example of godly lives, are the only Scriptural and worthwhile means to induce people to become Christians (I Corinthians 1:21; Matthew 5:16; I Timothy 4:16; Philippians 1:27; II Corinthians 3:2).

Some seek to buy allegiance with treats and entertainment. Those who followed Christ for the "loaves and fishes" did not follow him very long. They turned back because of his distinctive teaching concerning the "bread of life" (John 6:26-27, 66). Outward service may in this way be secured for a limited time, until a "higher bidder" comes along. True loyalty cannot be bought with such things. A congregation is out of its league and out of its place when it seeks to gain members through entertainment. The church of Christ is not in the entertainment business. Besides, one can find better entertainment (from a worldly point of view) at home on television. The church certainly cannot compete with professional entertainers and worldly places of amusement.

Those who are converted to the PREACHER because of his appearance, personality, age, academic degrees, ability to entertain, or even his speaking ability -- rather than to Christ -- will not remain faithful when he moves away, or is asked to resign. Those who are converted to A CONGREGATION and not to Christ, will become unfaithful when they move to a different locality, or when someone in the congregation disappoints them. And those who would be attracted because of a BEAUTIFUL MEETINGHOUSE can find more elaborate and expensive structures erected by denominational churches than by any church of Christ.

To stoop to such methods is foolish, and destined to fail. Those who would be attracted by such base motivations are not of any value in building a strong, faithful congregation, or of any lasting value to anyone.

People must be pointed to the "lifted up" Christ through a proclamation of his gospel, and through faithful, dedicated, godly living. One's "conversation" (manner of life) must be such as "becometh the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). Friendli-

ness, righteousness, goodness, kindness, hospitality and benevolence, are requisites of such a life; and when combined with ". . . speaking the truth in love . . ." (Ephesians 4:15), will attract the honest and good hearts which seek for truth and eternal life.

--P.O. Box 118, Parrish, AL 35580.

"Walk As Children Of Light"

Continued From Page 1

answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Ephesians 6:5-6; Titus 2:9-10). There are examples to be set on the job as one lives as a Christian should during the difficult as well as when it is easy. Certain things are wrong wherever one is. It is never right to lie, even a 'little white lie.' "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25). "Lie not one to another" (Colossians 3:9). Lying is always wrong, anywhere, anytime! It is condemned in the home, in the school, in the plant, or in the woods! Be safe: just don't lie!

As a child of light, a Christian must abstain from "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" and have our "conversation" (behavior, manner of life) "honest . . ." (I Peter 2:11-12). In this admonition of Peter we have a NEGATIVE and a POSITIVE approach to being the light of the world as we should. Certain things we are to leave off, things we must not do as found in I Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5; Romans 6:12. These are the NEGATIVES -- things which must not be done as a child of God. On the other hand, there are many good and wonderful acts which ARE to be performed by the child of God, such as those listed in Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9-10; Colossians 3:12-17. There also are the POSITIVES -- AND WE MUST DO THEM! We have no choice as children of God, BECAUSE THE "COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF" HAS GIVEN US OUR ORDERS, SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED! To disobey is TREASON!

To fail to act as we should as "children of light" is to invite the wrath of the God of heaven. To fail to act as children of light is indicative of the fact that we are not walking with him of whom it is said, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). If we are not reflecting the light as we ought, we need to get closer to the source of light -- Jesus Christ -- and "walk as children of light."

--P.O. Box B, Carbon Hill, AL 35549.

**A Gift Suggestion:
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The Joy Of Living For Jesus

Mrs. C. M. (Dona) Karrh

[Editor's Note: Sister Karrh's husband was an elder of the Sixth Avenue church until his death; and SHE long served as the church Librarian. Although enfeeblements of aging have curtailed her activities, she yet attends all services when she is able. Her brother-in-law, the late Pervie Nichols, printed this material in tract form, and I obtained her permission to present it to our readers. --Flavil H. Nichols, Editor].

Those who are planning for tomorrow are 'young' at any age. Christian living should begin early in life. It is advantageous to be brought up in a Christian home (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). One should begin as early as is possible to establish in himself good principles and Christian character. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

The greatest hindrance to the proper development of youth is not inexperience, but impatience. Our youth must not only initiate new programs of reform and blessing for the future, but they must finish all of our well-begun tasks. Instead of standing down in the valley in the lowest dumps, youth needs to get on the highest mountain. Even there, youth should stand upon the shoulders of all the great and good men and women who have ever lived in the past. From that vantage point one can get a clearer view of life ahead, and what it can be, as seen in the light of the past and of the future.

The greatest investment is in people; and the greatest investment in people is in youth and the work of character-building. We must recognize the fact that a better world for tomorrow must be built out of young people. It cannot be built out of those on the shelf.

In every chapter of the Philippian letter the apostle Paul speaks of joy, or rejoicing. Paul was a happy man, a happy Christian. Not all joys are limited to youth, nor even to those of good health. Happiness and joy come up from within a person, and do not necessarily enter from without. This is so after the truth from God has properly entered the heart and tuned it to the will of God in all things.

The little things which we do and say daily, from youth to old age, should bring us joy and gladness along the way of life. Of course, those who are not happy in youth and middle life, are not likely to be happy after the infirmities of old age come.

But life is made up of our thoughts. Evil people are evil because they THINK evil. Good people are good because the seed-thoughts of goodness find a lodging place in their minds and hearts. Our habits are formed by our training, or environment, from childhood to maturity (Proverbs 23:7).

Many of the things which we consider important in life are not the type of things which bring joy and gladness. Worrying over things which we can neither change nor control, burns us up and wastes our supply of joy potentials. It is like turning on the motor and burning up a tank of gasoline without ever putting the automobile into gear: it gets us nowhere! We should concentrate on things of most importance, things essential to life and happiness. Often a walk down a country road can give more joy, and get us closer to God and nature, than spending a large sum of money to satisfy fleshly wants.

--And don't overlook the joy of a daily task well done. There is, as it were, a real secret to happiness: it is to forget self, as much as possible, and to

share ourselves with others. Bear somebody's burden (Galatians 6:2), and scatter some sunshine in the life of others. When we learn, and learn it well, that sharing other's burdens will lighten our own, we are on the way to true education.

We should solicit the help of God, that we may be strong, able to be patient, able to bear up under our own load of life, and able to lighten the load of others. We need to know the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:1), and borrow some of his spirit. We need to be daily "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4).

"By love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). Happy are those who learn to serve others just for the pure love of serving. And to learn to serve "for Christ's sake" is real education. "Doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service . . ." (Ephesians 6:5-7). It is service which comes out of a good will that does us most good.

Many miserable people could have been happy if they had trained themselves to enjoy the laughter of little children at play. Like our Master (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13), we should dearly love little children. It should be a joy to teach and train them for Jesus.

The love of sweet music and the melody of song, even the songs of pretty birds, should be a joy divine. The swish of the wind bringing rain and snow to bless the earth, should make us happy. By properly reacting to our circumstances, we can make everything around us contribute to our happiness. God has provided us with every joy that a well-trained heart could wish; and what a tragedy it is that so many are so lacking in appreciation that they see nothing about them to make them happy! As light and beautiful flowers mean nothing to one totally blind, so a beautiful world full of lovely things means nothing to people who have developed no love for the beautiful, the lovely, and the artistic things of life.

Above all things, we should cultivate a love for people, just plain people made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). If a boy can learn to love his dog, we all can learn to love our neighbors, even as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-41).

Life is a journey through the years, from childhood to old age (Ecclesiastes 12). We are "pilgrims" and sojourners on earth (Hebrews 11:14-16). This world is not our home. When God gets us trained in this life to enjoy the beautiful, he will take us home to that beautiful city of God, where we can walk the gold-paved street and bask in the sunlight of God's love forever.

Real life is being able to live in the present, with some of the borrowed joys of the next world furnishing whatever is lacking in this world. Hope always sees a star, and hears the rustle of a wing. The Christian is never left unto despair, for Christ is always with us (Matthew 28:18-20). He will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). This faith is the real backbone and heart of life. We should learn to love to spend hours with Jesus, reading his word, and learning from his great wisdom and lessons of life never to be forsaken.

We do not grow "old" by living a certain number of years. But we grow "old" in the true sense of life, by losing the will and the faith to accomplish that which is worthwhile. Years may wrinkle the skin, grey the hair, and warp the frame a bit; but the loss of interest in living is the thing which makes one 'old.' and 'wrinkles' the soul

If you would stay young to the end, keep an unbounded faith in the future. Don't be afraid to live. Face the future with confidence and courage. Don't be afraid to work. God made us to work. Adam had to dress and keep the garden, before sin entered into the world. Work is not a curse for sin. Man was made to work. Those who work are happiest, and live longest. The victory of life is half won when one acquires the habit of joyful hard work. The happy man is a busy man. "The idle brain is the Devil's work-shop" (see Ecclesiastes 9:10).

If there is any lack of present happiness in old age, the lack is balanced and supplied by the sweet memories of past happy days, and the sweet hope of future joys which are eternal (Psalms 16:11). In old age, we count the added opportunities for doing things which we had always wanted to do as a blessing from God.

But our greatest joy comes from our faith in the God who holds the future in his hands. "Believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory" (I Peter 1:7-8). We know the Lord will never leave, nor forsake, us (Hebrews 13:5-6). Let no one retire from the Lord's service, regardless of age. Let those approaching old age pray as did David when he said, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power unto every one that is to come" (Psalms 71:17-18).

--1002 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

Paul In Athens

Continued From Page 2

GOOD.

3. Paul could well say, **HE IS GRACIOUS.**

God had in the past been gracious to man in overlooking some of his ignorance; but now Christ has come, and provision has been made. Man must now do the will of the Lord in order to enjoy the benefits provided. It is wonderful that even in Athens some did just that. Certain men did believe. They would thus turn from idols to serve the living and true God.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

A Gift Suggestion:
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Words Of Truth
For A Year
To A Friend!

Winning Souls



W. A. Holley

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

Paul recognized his duty toward the unsaved. He wrote, "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more" (I Corinthians 9:19).

Again, Paul was a debtor to all men. He, therefore, was ready to preach the gospel to the lost (Romans 1:14-17). Those who know the truth are obligated to share it with others less fortunate. The only power God has to save sinners is the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). The gospel of Christ is not a system of philosophy, nor a code of ethics. The gospel is God's voice addressed to the human heart, which, when obeyed brings forgiveness of sins (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

There Are Three Requirements

(1) The soul-winner must be sold on the gospel as the power of God to save believers (Romans 1:14-17). One must know the truth, be committed to the truth and to the teaching of the New Testament, if he is to win others to Christ. It is folly to send out unskilled and unlearned 'teachers' to attempt to win sinners to Christ and the church! A salesperson must know his 'product' if he is to be successful in selling it.

Do your homework before you try to win others to Christ (Hebrews 5:11-14).

(2) One must know his prospect; not just his/her name, but know something about his/her interests. Character and education and occupation should be considered. Oftentimes this much information will open many avenues for teaching the gospel. The New Testament furnishes such information regarding the original apostles, and of Paul.

(3) The soul-winner must know why he has called at the home of his prospect. He is NOT making a social call, nor just PASSING THE TIME of day, nor to TALK politics, sports, etc. As quickly as possible, come to the reason for your visit. Tell the person why you are there. Be just as warm and friendly as possible. Limit the time for your study of the Bible. --Don't wear out your welcome. Leave the door open so that your return for another visit will be welcomed.

The "How" Of Soul Winning

(1) The soul-winner must be a "Christian" in all that the term implies. Half-baked, lukewarm, nominal 'church-members' are sure to fail as soul-winners. Their veneer is just too apparent; their real character shows through. For example, Judas and Alexander and Demas could not have been soul winners (Acts 1:25; II Timothy 4:10-17). Paul gave up everything in order to be a soul

winner for the Lord (Philippians 3:3-11).

(2) Urge the person whom you are teaching to make a commitment to the Bible as the one and only source of authority. God's word is infallible, inspired of God, and will be the standard of judgment at the last day (II Timothy 3:15-17; John 12:48). To do otherwise is to have no basis of agreement (Acts 17:11; I Peter 1:22-25). The idea that we can 'take it or leave it' means that no agreement can be reached. Hence, urge Bible authority as common ground. Let the prospect know that he has the ability to read and understand the Holy Scriptures (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17).

(3) Start with the simple teaching of the Bible, such as faith, or the church, or repentance, or baptism, etc. Do not try to settle the more profound questions of the Bible, like why human suffering, and the like. As time goes on, you will gain more knowledge and then be more able to comprehend the more difficult subjects. Take a look at the sermons preached by Jesus and the apostles, and see how plain and simple and direct they are (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4, 17-18).

(4) Be courteous in your approach. Call and set up an appointment; don't just 'drop in.' If you fail the first time, try again; don't give up! Keep on till you succeed, if possible.

(5) Use your skills to make the best possible impression for your cause. Do your homework.

Know what you are trying to accomplish. Your enthusiasm and attitude will largely determine whether you succeed or fail.

(6) At the very first visit, get right to the point. Assume that the prospect wants to hear what you have to say. Explain to him/her that sinners are lost and need to be saved from sin. Tell him/her what a blessing it is to know that one's sins can be forgiven (Acts 2:36-38, 47). Should the person whom you are teaching seem to be difficult, it may be necessary to take a second person with you to aid you (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47).

(7) Never allow yourself to be drawn into an argument. If the person whom you wish to convert is lead to criticize, let him do so; but keep your composure and stay on the subject. If momentarily removed from the subject, you should return to it just as quickly as you can.

Do not hide the truth of God, nor compromise it (II John 9-11). Be just as diplomatic and tactful as possible. Know your subject so well that you can turn to various Bible verses which read as you say they do. In teaching people to become Christians, there is nothing else so powerful as the word of God (Hebrews 4:12). Memorize all the scriptures you plan to use and they will make you far more effective.

May God ever bless you in your work of winning souls for Christ.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Restoration Radio Network Begin Its 16th Year

Roy Beasley

In 1973 in Greensburg, Indiana, I began a five-minute daily radio broadcast to enhance my outreach into that community. Today, I continue this radio ministry while serving as minister of the Old Lasea Church, Maury County, Tennessee. The broadcast has grown to 125 programs heard weekly around the world. The **Restoration Radio Network** is heard not only in the USA, but also in England, Europe, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa.

I am convinced that people both need and want to hear the great fundamental truth of the gospel, presented in a plain and simple fashion. I especially emphasize the plea to restore the faith, practice, and worship of the early church as it was in the first century.

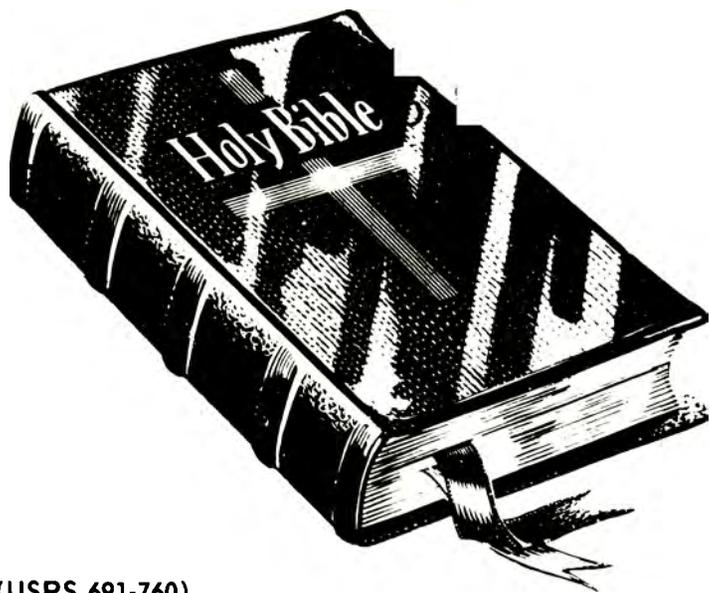
Three formats are used in the broadcasts: 5-, 15-, and 30-minute programs are prepared. Recordings are professionally done on high-quality equipment, and are provided without charge to congregations that wish to use them on local radio stations.

Restoration Radio Network is overseen by the elders of the East Huntsville Church, Huntsville,

Alabama. That congregation also provides and administers a Bible Correspondence program to listeners who respond. Contacts are referred to missionaries who provide follow-up, and assist them in their obedience. Sister congregations and individuals cooperate with the East Huntsville church in supporting the work.

Plans call for expansion of this gospel outreach in 1989. Numerous, powerful English-speaking radio stations in foreign lands have broadcast-time available. The Lord willing, **Restoration Radio Network** will secure time on some of them. The possibility of broadcasting via satellite is being investigated. An assistant has been employed to work with me in the business, operational, and correspondence departments of the work.

The need for gospel outreach to the lost masses is most evident. The message of **Restoration Radio Network** is time-tested, reliable, and dependable. Those interested in utilizing these lessons in local evangelism or in a mission field please write to P.O. Box 111635, Nashville, TN 37211.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

16:25

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What About Dinosaurs?

Brad T. Bromling

Dinosaurs! From children's books to T.V. specials, from toys to amusement parks, virtually everywhere we turn we are met with images of these horrific beasts of a bygone era. It is not unusual to read in our daily papers of new fossil discoveries, and how they affect our understanding of the origin and development of life on earth. Do these discoveries support the opinion that the earth is ancient? Scientists who believe in evolution would have us think so.

They theorize that dinosaurs became extinct nearly seventy million years before man arrived on the scene. Their incredible dates for the age of the earth (4.6 billion years) and for the beginning of life (3.5 billion years ago) and the extinction of the dinosaurs (70 million years ago) are based upon the assumptions that: (1) evolution has occurred; (2) evolution requires multiplied millions of years; (3) man is at the apex of evolutionary development, whereas dinosaurs are much more primitive. Without these assumptions, there would be no reason to set forth an ancient earth, or to place the extinction of dinosaurs in "prehistoric" times.

Christians who lack information in the fields of geology and paleontology often feel intimidated by evolutionary data. They forget that the dates attributed to the now-extinct creatures were not painted on them while they were alive; they have been assigned. Evolutionists have been vocal for so long that their theory has become the standard "explanation" of life. The halls of science have long provided evolution with refuge and dignity, so that many people assume that science is, by definition, evolutionary.

In fear of the so-called "scientific facts." some well-meaning people pretend that the beasts never existed, and that they are all part of a big hoax. But this notion is absurd; the flood described in Genesis 6-9 preserved too many indisputable dinosaur fossils to ignore. Skeptics often raise three questions in this regard: (1) Why are

dinosaurs not mentioned in the Bible? (2) Given their size, how could they have fit into the ark? (3) Where have they gone?

Dinosaurs ARE mentioned in the Bible -- in the same verse that refers to cats and kangaroos! Exodus 20:11 says: "for in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that in them is . . ." Although specific animals are not delineated in this verse, it is clear that ALL animals that now exist, and that have ever existed, were created by God in one week. This fact alone removes all doubt as to whether or not men and dinosaurs lived at the same time. God created man and all animal life on days five and six of the creation week. Nothing could be clearer! -- If all was created in the same week, then nothing was created before, or after, it!

Beyond this general reference, there are verses in the Old Testament that are best explained as references to dinosaurs. For example, Job 40 and 41 discuss two creatures called "behemoth" and "leviathan" which resemble massive dinosaurs. The description of "behemoth" fits quite well the data we have of the BRACHIOSAURIDS and DIPLODOCIDS -- among the largest land animals that ever lived. What is said of "leviathan" corresponds favorably with what we know of the HADROSAURIDS, and possibly other species of dinosaurs. The Biblical portraits painted of these beasts lead one to conclude that they were dinosaurs. No other beasts (living or extinct) fit these descriptions.

If one's concept of the ark will not hold dinosaurs, then his ark is too small! The Bible speaks of the ark as being a barge-like structure 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and almost 45 feet high. One simply cannot acknowledge these dimensions and honestly conclude that the ark was too small to hold dinosaurs. In fact, calculations have been made repeatedly which demonstrate that the ark easily could have carried representatives of all creatures, living and extinct, with room to spare (the common estimate is that the ark was

probably less than half full). Furthermore, it is logical to assume that the largest dinosaurs were represented by younger and hence smaller examples of their species. Remember, the ark contained only land animals and birds (Genesis 7:22); the many species of sea-dwelling dinosaurs were never intended by God to occupy the ark.

Where did the dinosaurs go? Why are there none today? The obvious answer is that dinosaurs, like many other creatures, were victims of extinction. Just because there are no dinosaurs today is no reason to conclude that they never existed. Passenger pigeons have also become extinct, yet who denies they ever lived? The hard question to answer is WHY they became extinct. Scientists are confused and divided on this issue. They have proposed many conflicting theories; yet none adequately explains the demise of these great creatures. Although the Bible does not provide a simple solution to the problem, it does give us a clue. Apparently the environment after the flood was radically different from that which prevailed before it. For example, human life expectancy before the flood was calculated in terms of centuries; whereas soon afterward the century mark became the exception rather than the rule. Likely, the global flood changed the earth's atmosphere so that the post-flood climate was essentially hostile to the dinosaurs. They may have stepped from the ark into climatic conditions with which they could not cope. Regardless of the reason for their demise, the fact remains that THEY DID LIVE.

Bible believers do not need to be dismayed by the stories that evolutionists tell about dinosaurs. The remains of these great creatures do not provide even a shred of evidence for the godless system of evolution. On the contrary, the more we learn about them, the more we should be impressed with the awesome power of God. In 1986 the fossil remains of SEISMOSAURUS, the largest dinosaur

Continued On Page 3

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor
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Key Questions About Baptism

Ken Tyler

1. **Is Baptism A Burial? Sprinkling? Or Pouring?** Paul made it plain in two different passages that baptism is a burial. Paul asked the Romans, "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" (Romans 6:3-4). He also said in Colossians 2:12, "BURIED with him (Christ) in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Paul said baptism is a burial. He could not have meant sprinkling, nor pouring.

2. **Who Is To Be Baptized?** Those who are able to understand and believe. Phillip asked the Eunuch, ". . . understandest thou what thou readest" (Acts 8:30)? By asking this question Phillip pointed out that a person must be able to understand before he can obey. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). It should be obvious that a mentally-retarded person, or a small child, cannot understand and believe. They are not accountable to God, because their minds are not developed where they can understand and believe.

3. **What Is The Purpose Of Baptism?** On the day the church began Peter told people who asked what to do to be saved to ". . . repent, and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). We must conclude that individuals are baptized ". . . for the remission of sins . . ." To think that a person can be saved and be a Christian without baptism is a misunderstanding of Bible baptism. Remember, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). Notice that our Savior did not put salvation before bap-

Continued On Page 3

Why Are People Confused?



Kenneth L. Jones

Why is there so much confusion in the world today concerning the teaching of the Bible? One reason why much misunderstanding has occurred is because of the kind of preaching and teaching people have been receiving lately. Some teachers try to impress their audiences with their great education by using "big" words, the meaning of which their hearers do not understand. In doing this they only demonstrate their lack of education; for the truly educated man is able to adapt his speech to the level of his audience. The primary purpose of language is to communicate ideas. When one has accurately transmitted an idea from his mind to that of his hearers, he has used perfect speech.

Some have been educated in sectarian schools or have been influenced by their literature, and speak the "language of Ashdod" (Nehemiah 13:24). That is, they use denominational concepts and doctrines. When Billy Graham uses such terms as "accept Christ as your personal Savior," "eternal security," and "witnessing for Christ," all know what he means; but when one professing to be a gospel preacher uses them, Christians question his meaning and soundness.

Some have been so soft and indistinct that they have not communicated anything at all. How can people possibly understand that they are in error and need to make a change, if preachers purposely are evasive? Some seem determined to speak in such a way that none will think they are saying that anyone is wrong! Although such teachers may understand and believe the truth themselves, their hearers have not been "rooted and grounded" in the "most holy faith." Their spiritual diet has been too weak to give proper nourishment. Some teachers have been schooled in the philosophy of Dale Carnegie, rather than the example and teaching of Christ and his Apostles. The true spirit of Christ does not avoid controversial issues, nor fail to expose and condemn error (John 4:19-26; Matthew 23; Acts 20:26-27; Romans 16:17; I Timothy 1:19-20; etc.).

Many are subjected to a "no-conclusion" type preaching. Everything is in the form of a question, and there are no absolutes. If any affirmative statements are made, they are of such a nature as "I believe," "It is my opinion," or "It may be." The Bible exhorts Christians to give answers, not questions (I Peter 3:15). Preaching should be positive, simple, distinctive, uncompromising, and in language easily understood.

Some teachers take delight in shocking their audiences. In order to accomplish this, statements and events are greatly exaggerated until they have no semblance to truth. An exaggeration is not truth. Some teachers seek to justify taking extreme and erroneous positions by saying that they are trying to offset an opposite extreme, or an equally erroneous position. It should be remembered that the end does not justify the means. In this case, it is doubtful the desired end would even be attained.

Many people are confused because of the contradictions they hear, not only from different preach-

ers of repute, but (many times) from the same individual. For example, such a teacher may say: "Your salvation is secure, and there is no way for you to be lost! Because, when you were baptized your past, present, and future sins were all forgiven through the blood of Christ; but don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying that a child of God can never sin so as to be eternally lost!" Or: "Salvation is wholly by grace and God does not require anything of us, but one must obey the gospel in order to be saved."

After having been subjected to such teaching as this, no wonder people are confused! May the truth ever be preached in love! May lost souls have an opportunity to understand, believe, and obey the truth.

--P.O. Box 118, Parrish, AL 35580.

A Once In A Lifetime Opportunity



Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

For fifty-five years the valiant voice of V. E. Howard has gone out on the air waves of wonderful, powerful radio in proclaiming primitive New Testament Christianity. For many of these years he has dreamed and hoped that one day "The International Gospel Hour" could be heard on powerful, popular WSM in Nashville, Tennessee. This is the station that has carried "The Grand Ole Opry" since its inception during the 1920's. It is a clear-channel station and can be heard throughout the U.S. and other countries as well.

Brother Howard recently signed a three-months contract with WSM for Sunday night at 9:00-9:30 CST. This contract covers January 29 through April 30th of 1989. The money must be raised to finance this program if it stays on the air beyond the April 30th deadline.

Surely, there will be some congregations and/or individuals in Tennessee (especially in Middle Tennessee), Alabama, and Kentucky -- areas closest to Nashville and WSM -- who will write brother Howard and say what they will do to underwrite the cost. If the funds do not come in by April 30th, brother Howard will have no alternative but to cancel the 90-day agreement with WSM.

Without delay please contact V. E. Howard, and tell him how much you or your congregation can help. This truly is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Brother Howard can be reached at

P.O. Box 7707,

Texarkana, Texas 75505.

Phone: (214) 792-0269 or 793-4116.

--P.O. Box 464, Ripley, TN 38063.

What The Faithful Preacher Can Expect

Weldon Langfield

There was a time, in the forties and fifties, when many young men, we're told, aspired to be gospel preachers. Our great nation, striving to live by Christian morality, esteemed highly its denominational ministers. Our own ministers, it seems, sometimes rode on the coat-tails of that esteem. A preacher was a handy fixture at a graduation exercise; his prayers were often sought to initiate public meetings. In the eyes of many in the Lord's church, the objects of admiration were not movie stars and sports figures, but rather great proclaimers of the Word. On the lips of young and old alike were names like Foy Wallace, Jr., H. Leo Boles, R.N. Hogan, Marshall Keeble, et. al. -- men distinguished by their knowledge of the Bible and their ability to proclaim it.

Needless to say, things have changed both in the world and in the church. In the world, the place of ministers of any stripe at commencement exercises and public meetings is a matter of dispute in the highest courts of our land. Preachers who are invited to lead prayers often are chosen for their willingness to avoid mentioning the name of Christ. In the church, even the likes of the great Foy Wallace, Jr., would be unwelcome in many congregations. Ministers who present the gospel plainly often find themselves fighting for survival.

The current state of affairs, and not the atmosphere of the forties and fifties, is closer to what the word of God predicted as the lot of faithful proclaimers of the inspired message. The Bible nowhere tells the preacher who is loyal to God that he can expect widespread respect in both the

church and the community. The scriptures, conversely, repeatedly warn that just the opposite can be anticipated.

The faithful preacher can expect to be hated

Jesus said, "If the world hateth you, ye know it hath hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Again, he predicted, "Ye shall be hated of all men on account of my name" (Luke 21:17). The word of God, when properly proclaimed, will "cut to the heart" (Acts 7:54). Worldly hearers can be expected to react with burning contempt for the messenger. It is emotionally painful to be hated, sometimes even by onetime friends, for no other "crime" than preaching the truth. David lamented, "They that hate me wrongfully are multiplied" (Psalms 38:19). Yet such should be expected by every saint willing to teach and stand by the word of God.

The faithful preacher can expect to be slandered.

Unfortunately, those who can't "endure the sound doctrine" (II Timothy 4:3) almost never admit it. We know of no instance in which a person has said, "I don't like that preacher because he preaches the truth faithfully and I'm such a worldly, compromising person I can't take it." Rather, to hide that fact, OTHER REASONS for rejecting the message will be given. Sometimes the preacher's approach might be criticized: "He didn't handle that right;" "He's not preaching in love," etc. In other instances, he may be the victim of vicious, unfair accusations which are designed to "take the heat off" those offended by the truth. Elijah was called by evil Ahab a "troubler of Israel" (I Kings 18:17). Christ was accused of "blasphemy" (Matthew 26:65). His opponents could not deny Jesus' obvious miraculous power, so they attributed it to Satan (Matthew 12:24). The apostle Paul's integrity was constantly impugned. His claim to being an apostle was denied by some (Galatians 1, 2), and he was accused of having "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Many other things could be said here, but it is clear that being the victim of slander is sometimes a way of life for one who stands firmly by the truth. We must always be cautious and not bring harsh criticism upon ourselves by our own misbehavior. Peter admonished, "For let none of you suffer as . . . an evildoer, or as a meddler in other men's matters" (I Peter 4:15). To suffer as a Christian, however, is a great honor (I Peter 4:16).

He can expect to possibly be fired.

Of godless Diotrophes, John wrote that he ". . . receiveth us not" (III John 9), and, "neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and casteth them out of the church" (III John 10). Worldly and compromising brethren can be expected to terminate "true-to-the-word" preachers. This is not to say all dismissals are persecutions: lazy and incompetent preachers should be fired, as should those who are immoral, and those who don't pay their bills. Ministers who won't work under the scriptural oversight of elders, as well as false teachers, should be discharged. Yet many true gospel preachers have been -- and will be -- fired. Christ himself was once "terminated" by the vast majority of his "congregation" (John 6:66). Even the great apostle Paul found his teachings unwelcome in congregations in which he had played a central role, the churches of Christ in Galatia (Galatians).

This is not to say that all Christians mistreat faith-

ful preachers! As Aaron and Hur "stayed up" Moses' hands (Exodus 17:12), there are those willing to stand behind sound gospel preaching. Yet it can be heartbreaking to be rejected by one's own brethren simply for proclaiming the truth. Elijah lamented, "O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (I Kings 19:4). Jeremiah sadly announced, "I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry, nor rejoiced" (Jeremiah 15:17). Yet for many faithful preachers, that 'comes with the territory.' Preachers who are indeed "dismissed" for preaching "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) should not feel ashamed nor defeated. Peter wrote, "If a man suffer as a Christian, let him NOT BE ASHAMED; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:16).

Godly elders, when choosing an evangelist, need to keep this in mind. That a man has been fired from a precious congregation may not reflect unfavorably at all on his suitability. In fact, in times of apostasy like these, a "firing" very well may indicate that he is just the person needed to fearlessly help the bishops feed the flock through loving, uncompromising preaching. It is doubtful that Paul would fare very well in many of the churches in the brotherhood today!

Conclusion.

A country-western song a few years back intoned, "I didn't promise you a rose garden." Likewise, Christ did not promise the faithful gospel preacher unrelenting respectability in the community, nor even in the church. He did promise, however, an eternal reward which will more than compensate for any unpleasantness here. Paul, who was persecuted far more than any twentieth-century American preacher, wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

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Saved By Grace Through Faith

CHARLES BRYAN

Paul tells us that we are the "children of God by faith" (Galatians 3:26). Faith (on our part) obtains and sustains a saving relationship with God. The Bible declares, "By grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). "Grace" is salvation provided, paid for, offered. "The grace of God. . . bringeth salvation" (Titus 2:11). "Faith" is the reaching out and taking it. We have the feeling, deeply ingrained in just about all of us, that nothing is just for the taking. We are bombarded with commercial advertisements that proclaim, "Free Offer" The fine print in these advertisements tells us that it is not really a "free" offer! The words "Free Offer" are just a hook to get us to buy. Not so with God's offer of salvation: It has already been paid for, and we never have to "pay" anything. We just claim it by having faith-trusting God.

The Galatians to whom Paul writes, despite having the foregoing truths proclaimed to them, had

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What About Dinosaurs?

Continued From Page 1

ever discovered, were found in New Mexico. Paleontologists speculate that SEISMOSAURUS may have been 120 feet long -- imagine the majesty of the God who created such a colossal beast!

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Key Questions About Baptism

Continued from page 2

tism. Peter also said in I Peter 3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . ." How can this statement be true if baptism is not absolutely necessary for salvation? The New Testament teaches that baptism is ". . . for the remission of sins. . ."

What have we said? (1) Baptism is a burial; (2) Those who are able to understand and believe are to be baptized; and (3) Baptism is for the remission of sins. Have you been scripturally baptized?

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Saved By Grace Through Faith

Continued from page 3

been persuaded that salvation was not theirs for the taking. Certain of the Jews had convinced them that it was necessary to keep the law (Mosaical) before they could really be the children of God. (See Galatians 3:3-4). It was necessary for Paul to teach them again that we are indeed the children of God "by faith." Law-keeping (Mosaical or other) cannot save us. Remember: salvation is by grace. Paul wrote to the Romans, "We have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2). I, by proclaiming salvation by grace through faith, do not minimize the importance of keeping the law of Christ. James said, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). We do not keep Christ's law in order to be his; but we keep it because we are his.

Paul proclaimed salvation to be according to promise (Galatians 3:16). Being promised, it is received as a gift. Faith, or any act of obedience compelled by faith, in no sense and to no degree is "earning" our salvation. The Scriptures emphasize that salvation is a "gift." Paul tells us (Ephesians 2:8) that salvation is "not of ourselves: it is the gift of God." In Romans 6:23, we read that salvation is the "gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Why is salvation through "faith," rather than through law-keeping or some means other than grace through faith? First of all, what God offers is far too wonderful for man to earn. What could a person do, or even be (for that matter), that would merit heaven? In human terms, it is priceless! Secondly, if salvation were "earned," rather than received through faith, it would cause a person to look inward, rather than upward. It would cause

the saved to look upon themselves as better than others. What we receive as a "gift," we have no basis for boasting concerning it; but what we earn or accomplish we can take justifiable pride in it. Paul said, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God" (Romans 4:2).

Salvation, being by relationship (Father- Child) and all of us receiving it the same, there is no reason for personal boasting. All of God's "children" are his children in the same way. There are no big I's and little You's among God's children. Paul expressed it this way: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28).

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God Is No Respector Of Persons

Clifford Dixon

Peter began his sermon to the house of Cornelius with these words, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Here are some ways that God is no respecter of persons.

1. He has declared that all are sinners. Romans 3:9 states, "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Also verse 23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All men prove this by sinning. There is not a sinless man that lives. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

2. God wants all men to be saved. God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11). Peter declares, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). Paul declares, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). God wants the rich, the poor, and all, to be saved. If we are lost, it will not be because God desires it.

3. God has provided a common Saviour -- Christ, who has died for all. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (II Corinthians 5:14). Christ is the one mediator between us and God, and he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:5-6). When Christ gave the Great Commission he extended the good news of salvation to all men of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49).

4. God is "no respecter of persons" in that he speaks to all men through the same medium -- HIS WORD, THE BIBLE. He speaks through Christ today (Hebrews 1:1-3). Christ sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in baptismal measure to guide them into all truth (John 16:8-14; Acts 1:5-8; Acts

2). They gave us the message of Christ in the New Testament. Man must be guided by this alone to be acceptable to God (Galatians 1:8; II John 9). If God spoke through dreams, visions, still small voices, or other ways in which man claims he speaks to some, then he would be a respecter of persons for not speaking to all this way. God's word is a complete guide for all man's spiritual needs (II Timothy 3:16-17). It contains all that "pertains to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). What need we more than this? A person can never be sure when he has subjective experiences; but when he reads it in the Scriptures, he can know he is right!

5. God has the same conditions of salvation for all men. To learn what to do to be saved we must start at the Great Commission of Christ. He told those apostles to teach all nations, and that those who believe, repent, and are baptized shall be saved (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49). When we see the great commission carried out on Pentecost, this is exactly what the sinners did to be saved. They listened to Peter's sermon, believed, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). In every case of conversion recorded in Acts they did these very same things to be saved. We who live nearly 2,000 years this side of them must do the same things to be saved. God has never, in the same dispensation, saved one man in one way,

and another man in another way. He has always required the same things of all men to be saved.

6. God has a common church for all. Jesus built just one church (Matthew 16:18). A description of the characteristics of this church can be found in the New Testament. There is only one way to become a member of the church, and that is to be saved from your sins so the Lord can add you to it. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Christ is the Saviour of the church (Ephesians 5:23). The church is composed of the saved. God urges everyone to obey the same gospel so they will be saved and he can add them to his church.

7. God's judgment will be fair and impartial. "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (I Peter 1:17). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). We had better prepare to meet him in judgment.

God loves you; and Christ's invitation to "Come, and I will give you rest" is extended to you. Won't you come and take advantage of the wonderful provision of salvation he has provided you?

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Aside From The Bible, Just Suppose--

Arnold Sexton

A young woman by the name of Mary Ball gave birth to a son in 1732. Just suppose that she had taken the option that so many potential mothers are taking today. That option is abortion. Had this woman aborted, it may have changed the history of this country. This country may have still been an English colony. One person often makes the difference. Mary Ball Washington gave birth to such a person by the name of George Washington.

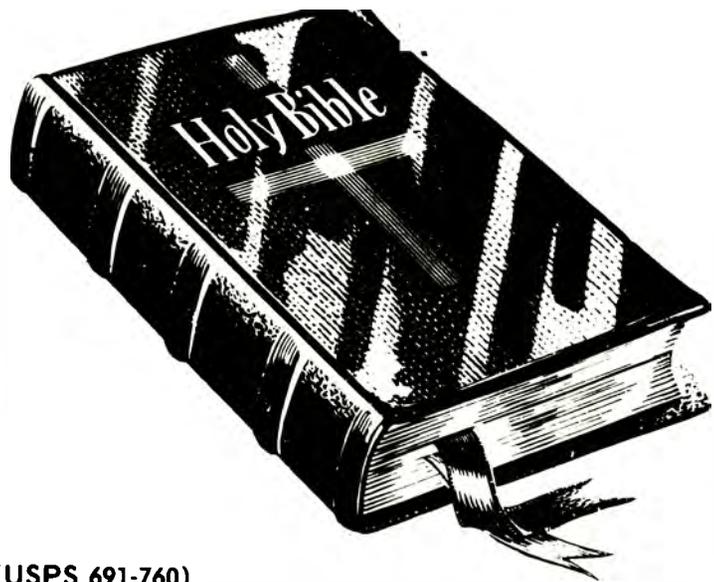
Nancy Hanks gave birth to a son in 1809. Just suppose she had decided against having this child. It is just possible that America would be quite different today. It may be that slavery would still be a common thing in many of our states. Nancy Hanks Lincoln gave birth to the one person who

made a difference between freedom and slavery. This one person's name was Abraham Lincoln.

Of much more significance, there was a young maid who gave birth to a son in the little town of Bethlehem almost two thousand years ago. Mary could have made all the logical (?) arguments that many think they have today. Just suppose Mary had done that. Not only would the history of the world have been changed, but man could not have been forgiven of his sin. Therefore, the human race would have been hopelessly condemned.

But if it would have been wrong for Mary to have done this, what makes it right for others?

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(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 9

Things Everybody Needs To Know



W.A. Holley

To know the truth of God should be the objective of every honest soul (John 8:30-32; 17:17). Truth is available, being contained in the sacred narrative. Truth can be understood, believed and obeyed (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17; I Peter 1:22-25).

The wisdom of men must not be mistaken for the truth of God (I Corinthians 1:18-31). The doctrines and commandments of men must

be rejected outright (Mark 7:6-13). No one can obey the commandments of men and become a Christian. Seed always bears fruit after its own kind (Genesis 1:11; Luke 6:44).

Many wish to live without God and his word; but to do so is to cut-off oneself from all divine guidance (Psalms 14:1). We should understand that God's word is true, if EVERYONE believes; and that it still remains true, if NO ONE believes it (Romans 3:3-4). The veracity of God's word does not depend upon men.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

(1) We need to know that the only means by which God speaks to the sons and daughters of men is through the Bible. God does not use dreams, imaginations, astrology, or feelings to communicate with men and women (Jude 3; I Peter 1:10-12; II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 3:15-18). If one abandons the Bible, he has abandoned GOD!!

(2) We need to know that so-called "natural" religion cannot meet the needs of lost humanity. The sun, moon, stars, and the earth may indicate a designer, a builder, etc., but natural religion can never reveal the identity of him who created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1-2; Psalms 19:1-3). If you wish to know God, open your Bible and read it.

(3) We need to know that man separated himself from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). "Hereditary total depravity" (Calvinism) has never been taught in the Bible. Man is not born astray; man "goes"

astray (Psalms 58:3-6). Psalms 51:5 does not teach that babies are born sinners. Read this verse and you will observe that sin was on the part of the mother. The Bible says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). Jesus invited little children to come unto him (Matthew 18:3; 19:14). Would Jesus have required others to become like little children, if little children are indeed totally depraved?? No person becomes a sinner until he by sinning transgresses God's law (I John 3:4).

(4) Satan causes man to disobey God. Satan is very powerful, but not so powerful that he cannot be "resisted" (James 4:7; Ephesians 4:27; I Peter 5:8-9). Satan's work is to deceive, corrupt, and lead men astray. How does he do it? He has his own "ministers" (II Corinthians 11:13-15), his own "doctrines" (I Timothy 4:1-3), and his own "synagogues" or churches (Revelation 2:9; 3:9). Satan's preachers are oftentimes well educated, possess wonderful personalities, and are very persuasive; but do not be deceived- read your own Bible (Acts 17:11; Romans 16:17-18; I John. 4:1).

(5) One needs to know that God's power to save sinners is the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16-17). The gospel of Christ is God's only power to save believers. Contrary to the view of some, God does not use the Holy Spirit to save sinners separate and apart from the Word of God or the gospel of Christ. Does the Holy Spirit have a part in the conversion of sinners? Indeed, he does! What is the Holy Spirit's work in converting sinners? The Holy Spirit teaches, guides, admonishes, directs through the word of God or the gospel of Christ. He thus influences sinners to obey the truth of God (II Timothy 3:15-17; James 1:18, 21; Ephesians 6:17). Sinners must obey the truth to be saved (Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

(6) We need to know if possible Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; and Luke 24:46-47, by memory. It is a shame for Christians to go through life not knowing from memory the Lord's Great Commission. How can we teach it, if we do not know it?? Other passages, I recommend Christians to memorize are: Romans 6:3-4; John 19:33-34; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; 22:16; Galatians

3:26-27).

(7) It is not impossible to understand the word of God (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). Countless thousands have understood it, believed it, and obeyed it. Just read the Book of Acts and you will see.

To be understood, the Bible needs to be rightly divided. There are three dispensations of time: The Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. The first two periods are no longer binding upon men. We live under the New Testament which will continue till the world ends. The New Testament can be divided into these classifications: The four records of the gospel, Acts, the twenty-one epistles addressed to churches and individual saints, and the Book of Revelation. Keep this in mind as you read.

(8) We need to know that the Bible is not of human origin. It is inspired of God (II Timothy 3:15-17). No man or set of men could write a book like the Bible. It addresses man's deepest needs, reaching the deepest recesses of his heart (Hebrews 4:12). It can stir man's soul, and furnish the motives and incentives which can lead man to change his life for the better. Neither mathematics, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, nor other branches of the arts and sciences can ever-ever solve man's sin problem!

Man was created in the image of God. Man needs to be reconciled to his Maker. Until that is done, man can never find peace with himself. Sins are terrible burdens which press heavily upon the human soul. Forgiveness of sins takes place in the mind of God. God will forgive your sin when you believe (Hebrews 11:6), repent of your sins (Luke 13:3, 5), confess Jesus' name before men (Romans 10:9-10), and when you are baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38).

Now, your record is made clean: you stand before God without spot or blemish. You are a child of God! Remain faithful to the Lord, and heaven can be your eternal home (Revelation 2:10).

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Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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How Do We Know That We Love God?

Kenneth Randolph

To love God with the heart, soul and mind, the entirety of one's being, is the first and great commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). No other demand has priority; no other is greater. Love of God strengthens the character, purifies the soul, beautifies the spirit, and nobles the life. Love is not constant; like the tide, it may ebb and flow. Love may be nurtured, and it can grow until it becomes the "magnificent obsession" of the life.

While love cannot be fully measured, there are certain clear standards by which I may gauge my love to God.

(1) My love of God is measured by my love of brethren. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 5:20). If I love my brethren, I will seek what is best for them. It means to weep with the sorrowful, to bear the burdens of the tempted, to befriend the friendless. It means to "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient to all" (I Thessalonians 5:14).

(2) My love of God is measured by my separation from the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). "Whoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (James 4:4). I am to denounce the sins of the world, to disdain the praise of the world, and to detach my affections from the things of the world. To "be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2) means to be not caught up in its fashions, immersed in its pleasures, dominated by its philosophies, nor live by its morals. We love God more, and the world less, as our minds are

Continued On Page 3

Where Are You On The Music Question?

Paul Kidwell, Sr.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). These words, with companion passages, have been our trusted guide. The worship of God in song has been an occasion for demonstration of faith in the authority of the word of God. Through the years we have emphasized that worship to God must be just what he authorizes, or else it is "vain" worship (Matthew 15:9). We preached it. We debated the question with any who dared "go beyond that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:6, A.S.V.) The simple singing of praise to Jehovah with no "adornment" was as much an identifying mark of his people as any single item.

Now there is divided thinking over "the music question." There are several groups to consider. Look at the following list. Other positions might be added, but these cover a major part of the "spectrum of thought."

1. Some believe all additions to the worship of Jehovah are sinful.
2. Some believe all MECHANICAL instruments in worship are sinful.
3. Some believe it is sinful for US to add mechanical instruments to OUR worship, but they are not sure it is wrong for the Christian Church to use such in THEIR worship.
4. Some believe we cannot add MECHANICAL instruments of music to our worship, but we may add vocal imitations of such.
5. Some believe we cannot add either mechanical instrumental music, or vocal imitations of such, to our worship in "formal assemblies" (they call this "corporate" worship); but we can add vocal imitations of such (but not mechanical instruments) when we are not in a "formal assembly."
6. Some believe it is permissible to do whatever we want to do in worship, and so they do. This

group, which includes informed sectarians, must surely enjoy laughing at the inconsistency of those who SAY they are in group one, but attempt to embrace groups 3, 4, and 5.

My brethren, we are paddling downstream to real problems. If and when we see another debate on the music question, the "vocal band" will rise up to haunt us. If I were a supporter of mechanical instruments of music in the worship, I would make this offer. "We will give up the organ . . . if you will furnish us one of your 'vocal bands' for our worship."

There was a time when gospel preachers would immediately unite in support of the first proposition advanced. Give us a few more "Fellowship Facades" and we will hear some openly advance the idea that the Christian Church may worship as they see fit, and we had best mind our own business. This doesn't pose the problem for me that some have seen. The Christian Church is a denomination. It started in rebellion to the authority of God's word. It has much which completely mocks the Bible. Their worship is corrupt, but it simply fits the mold of an apostate group. Their basic sin is not instrumental music. Their rejection of the authority of God's word condemns them in MANY points. Some who persist in referring lovingly to the apostates would have us believe it is a simple matter of a difference of opinion. Not so! It is rather a matter of basic Bible doctrine.

What we have preached through the years is true -- not because we have preached it, nor because years have passed. It is true because it is the message of the Bible. No man, nor group, can worship Jehovah acceptably without Bible authority for such worship. We must do WHAT GOD SAYS, in the WAY HE SAYS, FOR THE PURPOSE HE STATES. The simplicity of this basic principle causes some to reject it. So it has ever been.

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Glorious Disappointment

Bob Plunkett

This sounds like a paradox. Glorious and disappointment do not seem to go together. Glorious seems to go better with appointment. Yet many of our disappointments in life turn out to be glorious. This was the case with the man who was laid daily at the beautiful gate (Acts 3). He was placed there to beg for alms of those who went into the temple. Two men passed close to him and he asked them for alms. When Peter and John stopped, he must have gotten excited. Perhaps thinking, This is my lucky day! Not only did they stop but they looked on him with compassion. His great expectation turned to disappointment when Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none." Perhaps he thought, "Why did you stop? Why did you get my hopes up? I do not need your pity or sympathy. I need your help." Peter said, "Such as I have give I unto thee." Perhaps the beggar thought, "What is he going to give me? What is there beside silver and gold?" Peter said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise and walk." Again, the man must have thought, "If I could rise and walk I wouldn't be here! Are you mocking me?" You see, he had been like this since birth. Peter took him by the right hand and started to raise him up. Maybe even yet he thought, "What

are you doing? I can't walk. I might fall." But immediately his feet and his ankle bones received strength and he not only stood, but he walked, and leaped -- and praised God. What if he had received a couple of silver pieces that day, as he asked? He would never have walked into the temple with Peter and John. He would have died not only lame, but lost forever, without Christ.

Here then is a case of glorious disappointment. It happens in every-day life. A young man was brokenhearted when his sweetheart refused his proposal of marriage; but later he found the very one he needed - a wonderful Christian wife and mother. A man missed his plane on his way home for the Christmas holidays. He fumed and fussed -- until he found out the plane crashed, killing all aboard. The disciples were in tears, disappointed and shocked when Jesus was nailed to the cross; but the glorious disappointment came when Jesus rose from the dead!

Thank God for the glorious disappointments of life. We can be thankful that we didn't always get what we asked for.

--110 E. Fourth St., Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

Great Lessons From Acts Seven

Clifford Dixon

In this chapter we have the record of Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin Court of the Jews, his condemnation, and how he was stoned to death. Here we see introduced a young man whose name was Saul. He held the coats of those who stoned Stephen and was consenting to his death (Acts 7:58; 8:1). He will be shown to be a great persecutor of Christians before his conversion; and later after his conversion to be one of the foremost promoters of Christianity in future chapters of Acts. At this time we are impressed with the courage of Stephen to point out how they were resisting the Holy Spirit by resisting the gospel. Also we see first hand that those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12).

I. THE PROUD HISTORY OF ISRAEL WAS UNFOLDED IN THE SERMON OF STEPHEN. He started with the call of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and continued with Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve Patriarchs. He continues by showing

How Do We Know That We Love God?

Continued From Page 2

changed by study and meditation of the Bible and other good literature, by prayer and worship, and by humble service.

(3) My love of God is measured by obedience to his word. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:5). If we love Christ, we will "keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). All that God has commanded man to do, he can understand how to do it, he can obey it, and he can know that it is for his good. The gospel can be known, loved and obeyed; and tragic are the consequences on those who reject it (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Do we "delight in the law of the Lord, and in his law [do we] meditate day and night" (Psalm 1)?

There is no greater ambition than to know more of the love of God and of Christ. It is so deep and high and broad and long that we cannot begin to fathom it. Paul says the love of Christ "passes knowledge" (Ephesians 3:19)! When we contemplate his love, just as the riches of his wisdom and knowledge, we cry "O the depth" (Romans 11:33)!

Like a great magnet, his great love draws out my love for him. The only truly tragic life is a life without the love of God. As the poet expressed it, "What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow
Thy pity without end?
O make me thine forever;
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to Thee.

Let us make it our aim each day to "keep ourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

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that Joseph was sold by his brothers and was carried into Egypt. The Jews would be intensely interested in his providential rise to the Governorship of Egypt, and how he brought his family into Egypt. He showed the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt and the rise of Moses, their deliverer, quoting the passage that spoke of Christ's coming in the likeness of Moses, and how they rejected Moses in the wilderness, making a golden calf and worshipping it. Moses' leadership was rejected on a number of occasions, and it is from this that Stephen draws the comparison of the Jews who were trying him with those fathers of old. He said, "Yet stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). As the fathers persecuted the prophets, so they had been the murderers of Christ, the Son of God. The whole story of the Bible fits together so well when we read Stephen's defense!

II. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD SEEN IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH. Webster's definition of "providence" is, "God conceived of as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny: the quality or state of being provident." And "provident" means, "Making provision for the future." It was envy that caused the patriarchs to sell Joseph (Acts 7:9); but in Egypt it was God who was with him and prospered him in everything he did. All the people who were around Joseph were blessed because of his deep faith in God. Later Joseph himself understood: "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father unto Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 45:7-8). We are told that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28). We are also told that he will not leave us, nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). In view of this we are told to be free from the love of money, and be content with what we have. God indeed holds the future in his hands; and how we fit into it is determined by how we conduct ourselves before him.

III. THE PREPARATION AND WORK OF MOSES IS ALSO EMPHASIZED. His preparation began with a godly father and mother who were not afraid of the king's commandment, and did everything they could to see that he grew up to fulfill his mission in life. Moses' mother was actually paid wages by Pharaoh's daughter in rearing that boy, being given by the providence of God opportunities of teaching him of the true and living God and of his people. This preparation continued in Pharaoh's court where "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). He continues to tell of the wilderness preparation of Moses, and how God called him by his angel in the burning bush (Acts 7:30).

Even though God gave miraculous powers to his special people, and inspired them to give his message, he still required that they prepare themselves to the fullest of their human limitations for their jobs. Ezra is a good example of one who "set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, to do it, and then to teach it in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). God made him a significant leader in the restoration of Israel. Even though we have gifted men today to fill our pulpits we must ever realize that they have direct commands to "study" and to "rightly divide" God's

truth (II Timothy 2:15), to take heed to self, and to the doctrine; and to continue in them (I Timothy 4:16), and to give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine (I Timothy 4:13).

IV. THE PRODIGALITY OF ISRAEL IS ALSO POINTED OUT (Acts 7:38-43). Notice that while Moses was receiving the law, they were making a golden calf to worship at the foot of the mount. They later went after the idol gods Moloch and Remphan, and worshipped the host of heaven. They persecuted and killed the prophets. They did not keep the law. They become a lesson to us of what not to do.

V. THERE WAS ALSO THE "PRUNING" OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. This they did by resisting his words (Acts 7:51). God is not going to force people to obey him, because he respects the free will of man. He wants man to lovingly obey him, not feel forced into doing it. People today "prune" the word of God (which is given by the Holy Spirit), by taking part of it and leaving part of it. They want the passages on faith but reject the ones on baptism. Some in sin reject the passages on repentance; and still others in worldly living reject the passages about being pure in life.

VI. THERE WAS PARADISE FOR STEPHEN. He lived a faithful life. He had the courage to stand up in the face of Jewish opposition of the gospel. He lovingly told them their terrible spiritual conditions. They in turn condemned him, rushed him out of the city, and stoned him to death. Stephen, in death, called on God, asking Jesus to receive his spirit, asking God to "lay not this sin to their charge." His death is called "falling asleep." It must be sweet to die faithful to the Lord, as Jesus told the thief: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

This chapter is a wonderful historical account of God's dealing with man, and of the rebellious disposition of many men. It is also a glorious example of victorious living for the Lord. Let us learn from these lessons, and be faithful to the Lord.

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Will We Have A Second Chance?



Bob Prichard

Jesus is coming again, and men must be prepared to meet him when he comes again. It is very comforting to some to think that surely they will have a second chance to be saved. Some teach that a loving God could not send people to hell without giving them a second chance. Others even go so far as to say that everyone will be saved, because of the love of God. But the scriptures are clear that when Christ comes again, those who are lost will be eternally lost! They WILL NOT have a second chance

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Some Questions Regarding Giving



W. A. HOLLEY

Giving on the part of Christians for the purpose of supporting the work of the Lord is very important. If Christians do not support the church of Christ, who will?

Giving on the first day of the week is commanded by Almighty God (I Corinthians 16:1-2). This was a special collection which shows the method used by the early church to fund her work.

To please God, Christians must give of their time, talent, and money. It requires money to aid the poor, the needy, widows and orphans (James 2:14-17; I Timothy 5:8-16; James 1:27; Galatians 6:10).

There are two chapters (II Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9) devoted to this subject. These Christians had made a "promise" which Paul urged them to keep (II Corinthians 8:10).

WHAT ARE SOME PURPOSES OF GIVING?

(1) We must give because God has so commanded (Matthew 7:21-23; Acts 20:35). Here is one of the highest motives for giving: God commands it! Now read I Corinthians 16:2.

(2) The Christian should give as a means of his own spiritual development and growth (Ephesians 4:11-16; II Peter 3:18). Giving tests our spiritual progress. Are we too stingy, too parsimonious, too penurious, too miserly, to comply with the Lord's demands??

(3) Giving serves as proof of the Christian's love for God and humanity (II Corinthians 8:3, 9, 24; John 14:21; I John 5:3).

(4) We give to provide money for the purpose of carrying on of the Lord's work. "Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:13-14, ASV.).

WHAT IS THE LORD'S PLAN FOR GIVING?

(1) I Corinthians 16:2, in the Greek, reads: ". . .kata main sabbatou" which, when translated, means, "every first day of the week." (Read also Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 1:10).

(A) Who should give? "Every one of you."

(B) What should one give? "Lay by in store."

(C) How should one give? "As he hath been prospered."

(D) Why give? "That there be no gatherings when I come . . ."

(E) When give? "Every first day of the week."

Other passages which should be read are Acts 11:29 and II Corinthians 9:6-7. These passages use the words "ability" and "purpose." I Corinthians 16:2 uses the word "prospered." Hence, a Christian must give as he has been prospered, according to this ability, and as he purposes in his heart.

Christians are on their honor when they make their contributions each Lord's day. Are you giving to the Lord what you would not give to your President? (Malachi 1:6-9). If you know God's will on this subject, no man knows better than you

whether you are giving as the Lord has commanded you!!

THE WRONG WAY TO GIVE

(1) One must NOT give "grudgingly." "The grudging regret is set in contrast to cheerfulness enjoined in giving, as is the reluctance expressed in "of necessity," (Vina).

(2) We must NOT give out of "covetousness" (II Corinthians 9:5). The word "covetousness" in the American Standard version is rendered "extortion". Vine says of this word: ". . .As (a matter) of extortion, i.e., a gift which betrays the giver's unwillingness to bestow what is due. . ." Our gifts should be prompted by love (I John 5:3).

WHAT IS THE TRUE SPIRIT OF GIVING?

(1) We should give CHEERFULLY (II Corinthians 9:7). Verily, "God loves a cheerful (hilarious) giver." The Greek word HILAROS, as used in the text cited, "signifies that readiness of mind, that joyousness, which is prompted to do any thing; hence, cheerful" (Vine). To a Christian, giving is no distasteful chore; but rather, an act of great joy. Think of the difference between the giving of Barnabas, versus that of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:36-37; 5:1-11).

(2) Christians should give READILY, EAGERLY, ZEALOUSLY (II Corinthians 8:11-12), and with a READY MIND. It is through giving that treasures are laid up in heaven (Matthew

"God So Loved . . ."

Charles E. McDonald

May you be reminded, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This means that God so loved you and me that he gave his "only-one-of-his-kind" Son! I know not how this truth weighs on the hearts of others, but it thrills me --and moves me more deeply than any other truth!

Why did (and does) God love us so? It is certainly not because we are always so loveable! Then why? One reason is in his own nature: "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16). That is correct! God not only "loves" --he IS love! Because he, being love, does not "will" that any should perish, he loves us "so" --to the extent-- that he gave (of his own will) what was necessary to make salvation possible and available to us. Not because he had to, but because he wanted to! Not because he needed to, but because we needed it!

I find it difficult to grasp how any individual can candidly and seriously consider God's love for us, and not be moved to love God in return. The beloved apostle John wrote, "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

Our loving God, and being loved by God, does not mean that all adversity is (or will be) removed from life. Because of the imperfections of our love for him, because of our ignorance and our weakness, there will be difficulties. And, too, there is the need of discipline or conditioning to produce growth. One does not grow stronger day after day by doing less and less. We do not arrive at a destination by failing or refusing to correct our course when we drift from it.

May we determine anew each day that we will "Love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind," and "our neighbor as ourselves" (Matthew 22:37-40).

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6:19-21). Paul talks about "fruit that may abound to your account" (Philippians 4:17).

(3) The true spirit of giving involves LIBERALITY (II Corinthians 9:11). Generous giving should be the goal of all Christians. David did not wish to offer to God that which cost him nothing (II Samuel 24:24). "He that giveth, let him do it with liberality: (Romans 12:8, A.S.V.).

(4) Purposeless and spasmodic giving are sinful. We should plan our giving so as to accomplish the greatest good (II Corinthians 9:7). The church and the gospel deserve our support. All should uphold the greatest power for truth and righteousness on earth.

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Will We Have A Second Chance?

Continued From Page 3

to obey God.

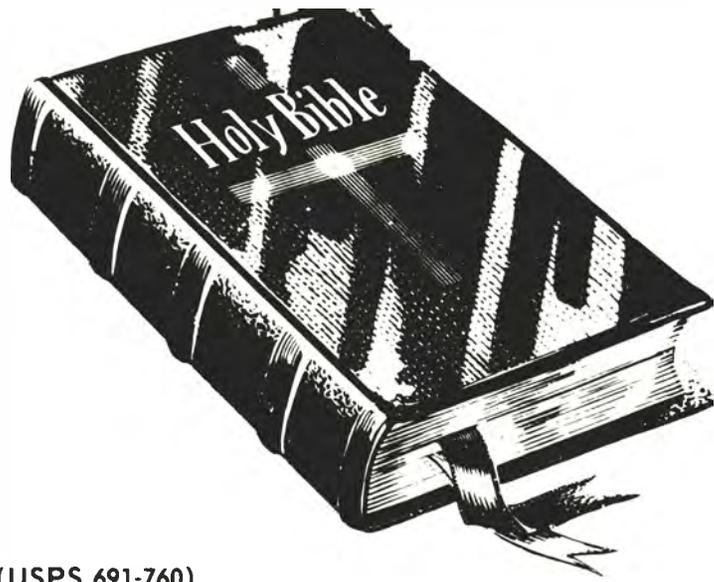
"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). This most spectacular event in the history of the world will be a SUDDEN event. Paul continues, "For yourselves know that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:2). It will be sudden and unexpected, and men will have no second chance.

Often a tragedy will cause people to repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness. But many never get that chance because death comes too swiftly to them. The Lord's second coming will be such that many who WOULD repent if they had time, just will not have time. John described a vision of men unprepared to meet God: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17).

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man was in torment, and would have done anything to be freed; but he received no second chance. Abraham said to him, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). There was no second chance for the rich man.

Peter reminds us, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:9-10). God is longsuffering, and wishes none to perish. But when the Lord comes again, there will be no second chance. Be prepared!

--P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.



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Words Of Truth

Words of Truth and soberness.

peak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 10

Who Is Jesus?



Brad T. Bromling

Who is Jesus? Virtually everything imaginable has been said of his identity. The cumulative force of this has been utter confusion in the world regarding the true nature of Jesus! Whereas his enemies have maliciously accused him of being many unholy things, his "friends" have assumed him to possess other -- equally erroneous -- identities.

When he asked his closest followers to report what the populace was saying of him, they responded: "Some say John the Immerser; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:14). While some thought He was simply a carpenter, others with anger proposed that he was possessed of a devil (Mark 6:3; John 7:20).

Nor did this confusion dissipate after his triumph over the powers of death. The Docetics of the second century taught that he was all God and no man; the Ebionites taught that he was all man and no God; the Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus was simply a perfect man; some Mormons accuse him of polygamy; the re-incarnationists believe he was one of them; the Muslims believe that he was just one among many good teachers; and the atheists of today allege that Jesus was insane!

But, according to the Bible, who is this Jesus of Nazareth? One text which answers this question authoritatively is Colossians 1:16-23. In this passage Paul stresses three facets of the scriptural identity of Jesus.

Creator

First, he reminds us that Jesus is the CREATOR: ". . .for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17). That means that not only

was he the active agent in creation, but that he is himself God.

The deity of Jesus is loudly proclaimed in the Scriptures. In Genesis 1:26 we are given the first clue of this, for there we are told: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." Although God is a BEING who certainly defies a complete comprehension by finite minds, he has given us a few glimpses into his character; one of these is that there are three personages involved in the Godhead (Matthew 28:19). It is with this understanding that readers of Scripture must come to John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made." As the Jews correctly perceived, when Jesus called himself the "Son of God," he meant a great deal more than did Luke when he called Adam the "son of God" (Luke 3:38). Jesus meant that he was equal with God (John 5:18), and for this reason they "sought the more to kill him!"

Further, Jesus is not only the originator of the creation, but he is also its maintainer! In the word "consist" (Colossians 1:17) inheres the idea of "hold together." This is the same thought expressed in Hebrews 1:3, where it says that Jesus is "upholding all things by the word of his power..." Here is an impressive statement of Jesus' divine power: he simply "spoke" the universe into existence (Psalms 33:9); and by his very "words" the universe continues to operate! Any description that fails to recognize Jesus' deity fails to describe the Jesus of the Bible.

Redeemer

Second, Paul informs us that Jesus is the REDEEMER: "in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." (verse 14; cf., verses 20-23). The term "redemption" conveys the idea that a ransom price was paid to buy another's freedom from bondage. The very theme of the Bible is the "redemption" of mankind from the slavery of sin (Romans 3:23; 6:16-23). Without Jesus, there is no redemption! In redeeming man, Jesus fills two offices: (1) He is the sacrificial

lamb that was slain as a sin offering. And (2) he is the high priest assigned by God to offer the blood of that sacrifice (John 1:29; Hebrews 4:15). Jesus paid the only acceptable price to secure man's freedom from sin -- his pure blood (I Peter 1:18-19). Any description of Jesus that misses his redemptive mission is inadequate.

Ruler

Third, Jesus is the RULER: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (verse 18; cf., verses 10, 13). This facet of Jesus' character is shown by Paul's use of two figures of speech. First, Paul refers to the church as Christ's Kingdom: "[God] delivered us out of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (verse 13). This figure implies that Jesus is a king, and as such he has complete authority over his subjects (Matthew 28:18; John 12:48). As our monarch, Jesus does not merely preside over a democracy (as an American president might). Instead, what he says is law! This is the meaning of Peter's statement, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both LORD and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36).

Second, Paul refers to the church as the body of which Christ is the head (verse 18). A human body which is functioning correctly is in complete submission to the will of its brain. What the head thinks determines the attitude, posture, direction, and well-being of the whole body. Just so, Christ demands the same influence over his church: "and [God] put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Any answer to the question "Who is Jesus?" that contradicts or fails to consider the Lordship of Jesus is unbiblical and useless.

Who is Jesus? Jesus is our CREATOR. Like clay in a potter's hands, who are we to do less than yield to his will (Romans 9:21)? Jesus is our

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

--Acts 26:25

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"Dear Abby's" Bad Advice

Greely Kirkpatrick

Several weeks ago a member here handed me a newspaper clipping with a "Dear Abby" column. It was about a widow who was sorry for the way she had mistreated her husband, who had just recently died. She asked Abby if God really does forgive sins. Abby's advice was that God does, simply by one's repentance. The widow had explained that she had never belonged to any church. Abby assured her that church membership is not necessary.

How foreign this advice is to the New Testament. Ephesians 3:10-11 says the church was in the eternal mind of God. He planned that the church should exist before he ever created the physical world.

Acts 20:28 says that God's only Son died to purchase the church. Would anyone give his life for something that is not important or necessary?

Ephesians 5:25 says that Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. The verse is saying that the church is the saved, and the saved is the church. How can anyone who is familiar with this verse, say that church membership is not necessary?

I Corinthians 15:24 says that when the end comes Jesus will deliver the kingdom (the church) up to the Father. What is to happen to those who do not belong to this kingdom? Obviously, they will not be delivered up.

Acts 2:47 says that the Lord adds to the church those who are saved. This clearly shows that salvation and church membership are simultaneous. You cannot have one without the other.

We wonder how much harm Abby has done by giving such bad and false advice.

--Church of Christ, Harrison, AR.

The Unity Of The Spirit



W. A. Holley

The unity of God's people has always been the objective of God Almighty. This was true in the Old Testament; and it is still true in the New Testament.

It has always been sinful to sow discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:14, 16-19). Strife, dissension, or contention for superiority has

ever been contrary to God's will and way.

There was strife between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham (Genesis 13:7-8). In this, Abraham was the peacemaker. Among brethren there should be no division.

Under the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, the kingdom of God continued for 120 years (See I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings). But, there arose division, as a result of which ten tribes of God's people, under the leadership of Jereboam, established their own kingdom. From that time forward, there was hostility, war, and division which was never healed. In many instances divisions once begun can never be ended! Let us beware!

Religious division is strongly condemned in the New Testament. Jesus, just before he was to be crucified, prayed unto his Father, saying: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and loveth them, even as thou lovest me" (John 17:20-23, A.S.V.).

Our Lord recognized the importance of unity. He said, ". . . Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth" (Luke 11:17, A.S.V.) What Jesus said here is still true! Absolutely true!!

The church of Christ was established in A.D. 33 upon the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Colossians 1:13-14). Was the church united then? Indeed it was: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common. . ." (Acts 2:44; Cf. 4:32-35). Acts 5:12 says, ". . . And they were all with one accord . . ."

What we have just read could never be said of denominationalism. Denominationalism is inherently sinful. Why is the foregoing statement true? Simply because denominationalism is built upon division -- a church for every man's choice -- as if JESUS has no church and no choice! The truth is: Jesus added to his church centuries before denominationalism ever came into existence. In fact, Satan is back of all denominationalism, for

he is the god of division. Factually, one can be a New Testament Christian, and never be a member of any (or all!) denominational churches, as were those who became members of the church in the first century!!

It is sinful for members of the church to split up into warring groups. We quote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

But in the church at Corinth there was division over preachers. "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:11-13). Hence, Christians are not to follow preachers, but we must follow Christ.

To follow preachers is to be "carnal" and to "walk as men" (I Corinthians 3:1-6). We honor gospel preachers; but sometimes they go astray, or get lost along the way (I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:16-18; 4:10, 14-17). Follow Jesus Christ who never goes wrong!! One should follow a preacher only as he follows the Lord (I Corinthians 11:1).

Dear Christian Friends, be on the look-out for those who make it their business to cause division. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

It is the duty of Christians to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3-6). This work can be accomplished by practicing lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, ever living up to the high standard of Christian deportment (Ephesians 4:1-3). Without these traits, the unity of the Spirit cannot be achieved.

What are the planks of the unity of the Spirit? There is. . .

- One body . . . the church, Ephesians 1:22-23.
- One hope -- life eternal in the world to come, Mark 10:30.
- One Spirit -- the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 12:4.
- One Lord -- Jesus Christ--, I Corinthians 8:6.
- One faith -- Jude 3; Romans 10:17.
- One baptism -- Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38.
- One God -- Galatians 3:26-29.

Please study these facts carefully. There are seven "one's" here. One cannot have the 'church of one's choice' any more than one have the Spirit, or Lord, or God of his choice. One cannot have the faith of one's choice any more than the God of his choice.

Dear Reader, believe, and obey the truth today.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Is Attendance That Important? Isn't What Is In A Man's Heart More Important?

Bob Prichard

The idea that church attendance is not very important would have seemed very strange to the first century Christians. From the beginning of the church, they met together to worship God. Luke described the early church in Acts 2, saying that the three thousand Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:42, 46-47).

Paul wrote, "When you come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Corinthians 14:26). Obviously, one of the things that they most often did was to "come together."

But some argue that just "going to church" does not make one a Christian, and "going to church" doesn't have that much to do with the kind of person one really is. There is no doubt that simply "going to church" does not make one a Christian; and it is also true that the kind of person one really is, is very important. But these arguments are really irrelevant, because God has commanded that they who would be pleasing to him must meet together to worship him. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). If one does not do what Jesus has commanded, he sins. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Failure to worship with the church shows a lack of love for the Lord.

The Hebrews writer said, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). How can a Christian "provoke unto love and good works," or be provoked unto love and good works, when he forsakes the assembly? Every member is needed for the worship services.

The absentee misses the opportunity to join with other Christians in singing praises to God, and

Who Is Jesus?

Continued From Page 1

REDEEMER, and like the two men from Jericho who were freed from the bondage of blindness, we ought to arise and gratefully follow him (Matthew 20:34). Jesus is our KING, and as his subjects we must serve him with all reverence and humility.

Yes, the world is confused over the identity of the Nazarene; and this confusion will result in the condemnation of many. If those of us who call ourselves his friends fail to recognize -- and teach others -- these facets of Jesus' character, we will fare no better in the presence of Jesus who then will be our Judge! (II Timothy 4:1).

--230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

offering corporate prayer to God. The absentee misses the opportunity to give to God, as he has been prospered. He misses the opportunity to learn from and profit from exhortations from God's word. Can anyone say that he is really better off by

not participating in the worship of the church?

The willful absentee sins against the God of heaven, denies himself the blessings of God, and hurts the church, the bride of Christ.

--P.O. Box 269, Elba, AL 36323.

Non Attendance Is A Sin

Gus Nichols (1892-1975)

If one member of the local church can ignore that church and treat it as of the devil, refuse to assemble and work with the members for its edification and good, and not be guilty of willful and fatal sin, which if not repented of, confessed and forgiven, could lead to eternal destruction, then all the members of that congregation could abandon such a church and its work and worship, destroy it off the face of the earth and not sin in so doing.

And, if all the members of one local church could so abandon and neglect the work and worship of that one church and not sin, then all members of all churches of Christ on earth could abandon all of them, destroy all churches of Christ and not sin -- and this would destroy CHRISTIANITY off the face of the earth.

Therefore, it is a willful sin, which if not confessed and forgiven, will cause one to lose his soul in eternal perdition, to willfully ignore and abandon the work and worship of the church for one year; and if for one year, then for one month, etc. For if one member could ignore the church and still be a Christian, then all could, and the doors would be closed for a year.

Therefore, all members who have quit attending the service and worship of the church, have quit the church, unless the absence is unavoidable.

Such backsliders should be restored, if at all possible. They are God's children, but sure to be disinherited and lost if they die in their sins. "Unto him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not; to him it is sin" (James 4:17). And "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

Those who cannot be taught and restored should be excluded from the fellowship of the church (II Thessalonians 3:6, 15; 5:1-13). No one can be a Christian while ignoring the church which cost the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). A fish could as easily live out of the water as a child of God could live the Christian life apart from the worship and service of the church.

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES." (Hebrews 10:23-27)

Decently And In Order

Dean Fugett

Somewhere a well-dressed man walks briskly back and forth before the front rows of an auditorium, steadily sing-songing his message while the people nod their heads in agreement to his doctrine. After a sufficient working up of emotions, with promises of miracles to be seen, he calls for participants to come to the front. As people march down, the atmosphere rises almost to a fevered frenzy. Now people are standing. Some are waving their arms to and fro; some are chanting; some are jumping up and down; some are praying, almost trance-like. All the while the preacher keeps up his spiel. Then he walks before each one standing at the front, speaks quickly and loudly, grasps the shoulder, strikes the subject on the forehead with the palm of his hand -- and someone catches the "healed and blessed" person as he/she falls backward! This action is repeated until shortly, no less than a dozen men and women are writhing on the floor. The frenzy has gradually increased to a level of chaotic noisiness. The scene is a modern electronic preacher, "church"

assembly, anywhere in the U.S. But the apostle Paul said, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

Another well-dressed preacher walks back and forth before an audience. In one area of the assembly some are praying audibly; some are striking into personal songs of praise, and others are quoting or reading scripture. Some are partaking of the Lord's Supper. When the preacher makes certain points, some clap. Some sit quietly with hands held palms-up, extended toward the ceiling. "Praise the Lord" can be heard quite often. The scene is a "church of Christ" in Somewhere, U.S.A. But Paul said, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

Brethren, claims of such unauthorized actions to declare some "more spiritual" than those who don't participate in such disruptions, do not stand up to scriptural investigation. We adamantly deny that those who do such are any more "spiritual" than many with whom we have been reverently worshipping for decades.

--1820 Cedar Grove Rd., Cave City, AR 72521.

"Ye Shall Hear, And Shall Not Understand"

Nick Hamilton

Let me illustrate this text from Matthew 13:14.

Sunday night late I flipped through the television dial and caught part of a program for medical doctors on a network dedicated to them. I don't know what the program was about. I watched it for maybe twenty minutes and never could understand what they were saying. There was an interview segment interrupted by film clips of some procedure in progress. The surgical segments spared no gore. It was real, live cutting, folks!

Actually, the film segments were more understandable than the interview. I could "see" what was happening -- and it sort of made sense. But the doctors being interviewed could have talked all night and I would not have come up with

the visual images the pictures gave me. I was glad I could see what they were talking about -- blood and gore and all.

My problem, I finally decided, was that I didn't understand their lingo. Let's face it -- doctors have their own language (as well as their own penmanship rules -- they write just like they talk)! Not having gone to school with them and having little opportunity for associating with them, I have never picked up on that lingo. Obviously, THEY know what they are talking about, but they sure lost me. Twenty minutes was just about enough of that.

Do you know that most people in the world see US in the church as having OUR own language?

Really! WE know what we are talking about, and they perceive that we do. But THEY haven't the foggiest notion what we mean. I can see why the average person outside the church feels uncomfortable and intimidated by us. He is bound to feel left out of the conversation. Twenty minutes of us -- and he is hunting the channel changer!

He very likely would be much more comfortable and learn vastly more by seeing us in action. Invite your friends to services. Live the example of Christ before them!

Remember: "I'd rather see a sermon . . ."

--Pleasant Valley Church, Little Rock, AR.

Where Are You Going?

Dana Watford

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak to a group of prisoners at the State Penitentiary. I am happy that I was able to share the gospel of Christ with those men. But a somewhat amusing incident took place as we were leaving the building to go back across the prison yard. We were late getting through with the service (through no fault of my own) and instead of being able to walk across the yard when it was empty, we had to walk when it was full of prisoners going back to their cell blocks. I was out in the front of our group talking to one of the prisoners who had been at the service, when I realized that I went through a gate that I had not remembered coming through when we came in. I was going into the cellblock with the prisoners! I heard someone ask from behind, "Where are you going?" Several of the prisoners

invited me to come in with them! Of course, I refused. When someone asked me why I was going that way, the only reply I could come up with was, "That's what happens when you follow the wrong crowd." It was somewhat comical when I said it, but the truth of it was plain to see.

There is perhaps no explanation given more often for our actions than: "Everybody else is doing it." This is given to explain everything -- from our choice of clothes, to our willingness to engage in the same sins as those around us. It is our refuge against the pleas of our friends for a life that is more noble and pure. "Everybody's doing it" seems to be the standard of too many today.

It would be wise for us to consider this standard of following the crowd in light of some things which we know from the past. What if we had lived with Adam and Eve in Eden. Everybody

present disobeyed God! Would you have followed the crowd on that day? What if you had lived in Noah's time? If someone had asked you, "Where are you going?" Would you have been walking toward the ark with that magnificent minority? or, following the multitude away from it to do evil, and to death?

This attitude of following the crowd is dangerous! It assumes that the standard of right is determined by men. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Men have never been able to agree on an acceptable way of life, much less follow such a standard (Jeremiah 10:23).

The only way to know what is right is to learn what God has said! His word alone is the standard (Isaiah 49:22).

--Rt. 6 Box 248, Benton, KY 42025.

Get Out And Do What You Are Supposed To Do

Joe Connell

The mail arrives daily with letters reproduced through the latest technology from well meaning young enthusiastic college people and other not so young asking the church to send them on a singing tour, a survey trip, a trip for the school or somewhere else. A preacher writes who wants to go here or there for a few days. Many other requests come.

While all this is fun and good, it isn't getting the work of the church done. It isn't preaching the gospel, although many today have been lulled into believing this is it. I am not saying this is wrong, but that there is more to evangelism than this.

Too often our concept of mission work is going somewhere, hanging out a sign, passing out tracts, doing a survey or running an ad in the local paper. Is not the Bible our guide? What do you see the apostles doing? Confronting! What do you see the scattered disciples doing? Confronting! ". . . They went every where preaching the word." When the early disciples got to town you knew they were there. They didn't meet with the ministerial association or powers that be. Neither did they seek a glad welcoming. They did begin

immediately to aggressively teach the milk man, the mail person, the saleswoman and all others. Of course, then it was the tent maker, sorcerer, island ruler, jailer, soldier or governor.

We need to change our lives from being busy people to being busy about the Lord's work. Elders need to quit spending so much time pouring over requests for help and other physical matters and get out among the flocks. Deacons need to become responsible to do their work and to look out for work that needs to be done. Always there is more

to do than has been requested. Preachers need to come out from behind the desk and go into the streets and among the people. True gospel isn't really preached until someone hears it. They need to be sure to tell the story true. All this is difficult because it means confronting others about their lives.

Until there is a personal face to face meeting there will be few conversions.

--307 N. Gloster St., Tupelo, MS 38801.

Would You Be Elected?

Gus Nichols (1892-1975)

Suppose you as a member of the church had to run for membership in the church each year, and your election depended upon what you had done for the Lord the past "term." Let us further suppose that your re-election depended upon the "record" of your attendance at Bible school and at the

preaching and worship services on the first day of the week. What about your contribution? Would you be glad to make it public? How about your record of inviting others to church, and hospitality and friendliness and good works? Would you be re-elected each year? Peter says, "*Make your calling and election sure*" (II Peter 1:10).



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Words of Truth and soberness"

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Are We Saved Like The Thief On The Cross?

Clifford Dixon

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One, following the crowd, railed upon him and told him to save himself. The other rebuked the railer and asked to be remembered in Christ's kingdom. Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43). Many, thinking that one can be saved by faith only, say, "The thief was not baptized, and he was saved; so I believe I can be saved without being baptized." We need to honestly appraise this situation: Can we be saved like the thief on the cross?

1. CAN YOU BE SURE THAT THE THIEF WAS NOT BAPTIZED? There went out to John all Jerusalem, Judea, and the region around Jordan, being baptized by him in the Jordan river (Matthew 3:5-6). Subsequently Jesus made and baptized "MORE disciples than John" (John 4:1). Could not the thief have been in that number and later turned to being a thief? We are not assuming that he was baptized; but those who claim he was not, must necessarily assume that he was NOT baptized, which they cannot prove.

2. WAS THE THIEF AN ALIEN SINNER? OR, AN ERRING CHILD OF GOD? Being an Israelite put him under the law of Moses and made him a child of God. The law of pardon for an erring child of God is different from that for an alien sinner. The erring child of God is to repent, confess his faults, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; James 5:16). The alien sinner must believe, repent, confess faith in Christ, and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:10).

3. WAS THE WILL OF CHRIST IN EFFECT WHEN THE THIEF WAS TOLD HE WOULD BE IN PARADISE THAT DAY? For a testament or will to be in effect, there must be the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:16-17). Christ had not yet died; so his will was NOT in effect! When a man is yet living he can dispose of his goods in any way he sees fit and upon the conditions he wishes. But once he dies and his will comes into effect, his

property is disposed of according to the will. On earth Christ told the palsied man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." His critics accused him of blasphemy, to which Jesus answered, "For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house" (Matthew 9:1-6). Christ forgave sins under various conditions and circumstances during his personal ministry. He told the sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50 that her sins were forgiven. He assured Zaccheus that salvation was come to that house that day (Luke 19:1-10). These, like the thief on the cross, were during the personal ministry of Christ and are no examples to us who live under the will or testament of Christ. We must meet its stipulations of faith, repentance, confession, and baptism if we are to be saved.

4. NOTICE THAT IF WE ARE SAVED LIKE THE THIEF ON THE CROSS THEN:

1) The will of Christ would be of no effect, but one could be saved by the law of Moses. Yet the law could save no one (Hebrews 10:1-4; 7:18-19), whereas Christ is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by him (Hebrews 7:25). The way to Christ is in the New Testament.

2) If we could be saved like the thief then one would not have to believe the gospel to be saved -- for the thief did not believe the gospel. Paul says the gospel includes the facts of the death of Christ for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection; and that it is by these that we are saved (I Corinthians 15:1-4). None of these things had transpired when Christ told the thief that he would be in paradise that day. It is necessary today for us to believe the gospel to be saved (I Corinthians 1:18-21). That is different from the thief on the cross.

5. THE THIEF ASKED TO BE REMEMBERED IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. The kingdom of

Christ, which is the church, was established on the Pentecost day of Acts 2. What is said of salvation "by faith only" in the kingdom? James (2:24) declares, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." The great commission of Christ, given after his resurrection, declares: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Christ does not promise salvation to those who believe only. The thief was never in the kingdom; but if he had been, he would never have been taught, nor would he have believed, the doctrine of salvation by faith alone.

6. WHEN THE WILL OF CHRIST DID COME IN, as recorded in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, empowering them to preach without mistakes and to confirm what they taught with signs and wonders. Peter preached the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, with the effect that the people were "pricked in their hearts" and cried out: "What shall we do?" Peter told them to, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:1-38). Note that not one was exempt from repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. Not one was told that he could be saved by faith only. That is not the will of Christ to the alien sinner.

If you as an alien sinner would be saved, the terms are faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. Do not depend on being saved like the thief who lived under a different dispensation, law, and conditions, than do we.

--Route 3, Box 62, Brewton, Alabama 36426.

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Why Mormonism Is A Cult



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--Acts 26:25

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By Ray Hawk

folk believe? What makes them a cult?

Their Founder

In the 1820s, a young man by the name of Joseph Smith claimed an angel spoke to him and told him where some golden plates were located. From these plates came the Book of Mormon. After the Book was given, the plates conveniently disappeared.

Mormons claim that a young man who was uneducated, as was Joseph Smith, could not possibly have given a complicated book to the world such as the Book of Mormon. What they refuse to tell you is that Smith was helped by a Sidney Rigdon, an apostate member of the churches of Christ. One will notice several similarities between the churches of Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. One may also notice that a number of the doctrines which Rigdon held, which separated him from the churches of Christ, found their way into Mormon doctrine.

Although the Book of Mormon was supposed to be several hundred years older than the King James Version of the Bible, one-eighth of the book contains scripture copied directly from the KJV of Smith's day. It has all of the italicized words which the KJV translators added which are supposed to help the reader better understand the text. This hardly helps the claim of the Mormons that this book is older than the KJV.

According to Mormons, the Bible (Old and New Testaments) is supposed to be God's scripture to the Gentiles. Since most of us are Gentiles, the Book of Mormon is supposed to be God's revelation to us.

God gave us the Old and New Testament. The gospel of Jesus Christ was to be preached to every nation and each person (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). It was for both Jew and Gentile (Romans 1:16-17). Both Testaments are complete and they are all we need for doctrine (II Timothy 3:16-17). Anyone who teaches something more or less than the gospel of Christ is cursed by God (Galatians 1:6-9).

Living Apostles On Earth

Mormonism believes there are to be living apostles in the church on earth today. Churches of Christ have the same apostles the first century churches had. However, those apostles are in heaven, not on earth. We follow the apostles

doctrine, just as the first century church did (Acts 2:42).

If the Mormon apostles are real, let them confirm their apostleship as did the first century ones. They could do special miracles (II Corinthians 12:12). If Mormon apostles can do what Paul and others could do, let them prove themselves as Paul and others did. Since they will not, we cannot accept their claims.

Their Name

The called out ones in the first century were referred to as "the church" (Acts 2:47), "the church of God" (I Corinthians 1:2), "the body of Christ" (I Corinthians 12:27), "the kingdom of his (God's) dear Son" (Colossians 1:13), "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9), "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), "the house of God" (I Timothy 3:15), and "church of the living God" (I Timothy 3:15). It was never referred to as the Mormon Church, the LDS Church, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Since we must speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11) and be under the Lord's authority (Colossians 3:17), we should not refer to ourselves by some name not authorized in God's word.

Contradictions Between The Bible And Book Of Mormon

The Book of Mormon says Jesus was born in the city of Jerusalem (Almah 7:10). When I asked a Mormon elder about this, he said that Bethlehem was a suburb of Jerusalem. That is not the case. The two cities are about 6-8 miles apart; it would take about 2 hours to journey from one to the other in the first century.

God's prophet said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, not Jerusalem.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Matthew records that this scripture was referred to when the wise men inquired of Herod where the Messiah would be born (Matthew 2:5-6). This one blunder on the part of the writers of the Book of Mormon, proves it is not from God. God knew where Jesus was to be born. The writers of the Book of Mormon missed it by 6 or 8 miles!

The Book of Mormon states that remission of sins was fully accomplished some five hundred years before Christ died on the cross (Mosiah 3:13). If that is the case, Jesus died in vain. Jesus is the author of our eternal salvation (Hebrew 5:9). He shed his blood "for" (in order that we might receive) the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28). Everything in the Old Testament pointed to that blessed event of the death of Jesus upon the cross. The Book of Mormon not only contradicts the Bible; it proves by such blunders that it is not inspired. It is a work of man, not God.

Baptism For The Dead

Mormons believe they may be immersed for the dead. They use a passage from the KJV to prove

Words And Actions

Dean Fugett

When Paul wrote to Titus, he had some descriptive words for some who did not hold purity in high esteem. He said "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16). Here Paul identifies the individual who is opposed to every authorized good work because he is of impure mind. He sees no good in anything! He is opposed to everything! -- Not on the basis of scripture, but on the basis of simply being reprobate (a failure) to every good work.

Another class is identified by these words. Those who say they "know" God, but at the same time, are disobedient to his will. John said that one cannot know God without keeping his commandments. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar . . ." (I John 2:3). In fact, assurance of "knowing" God is limited to those who keep his commandments: "And hereby we do know THAT WE KNOW HIM, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS" (I John 2:2). Those who are teaching that we must "know" God, but we do not have to keep his commandments, are wrong. Those who do not seem to know how to come to know him, need to read I John 2:2-3 before telling others that which they do not know themselves. They "profess" to know him, but they deny by their disobedience.

Jesus also said that more is involved than just calling Jesus "Lord," or admitting his Lordship: One must DO the Father's will (Matthew 7:21-27). Our Lord asked, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord; and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Words AND (just any) actions will not suffice. We must combine professing with obeying. This is something that most denominations have not learned! And apparently some of our brethren are joining their ranks. Be sure to compare your profession with your actions. Do they support each other? or, deny each other?

--1820 Cedar Grove Rd., Cave City, AR 72521.

Continued On Page 3

What Will You Leave Behind?



W. A. Holley

From time immemorial men and women have been leaving this old world. It is not a question of whether we shall leave, but when we shall depart.

There is an appointment which we all must keep (Hebrews 9:27). A great Judgment Day is coming (Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10-11). We will enter eternity prepared or unprepared (Amos 4:12; John 14:1-6). Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

Since we are responsible people, responsible for the acts we perform, for the words we speak, and for the choices we make, we should be willing to do some serious thinking (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19; Joshua 24:15). In one sense it is possible for one to influence others here on earth even after one is gone into the next world (Hebrews 11:4). Even though Abel has been dead for centuries, he still speaks to modern man. So can you speak even after you leave this world.

Dear Reader, what will you leave behind? We shall raise a few questions:

(1) Will you leave behind a life filled with sinfulness? a life which was devoted to lawlessness and disobedience to God and man? It is written of Jehoram, a king of Judah that he "departed without being desired" (II Chronicles 21:20). Jehoikim is described as dying without anyone to lament his memory. We quote: "But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shedding innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoikim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 22:17-19). Here is a man of high rank who died in disgrace, receiving no honorable burial at all.

There is another view which can be laid before our eyes. Jereboam was so wicked that only one of his children -- a young child -- would receive an honorable burial (I Kings 14:10-13). Parents, what examples do you set before your children? (Ephesians 6:1-4).

(2) All should leave behind the power of a good example. This is exactly what Jesus did for us. "... Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:20-25). Our friends, our neighbors, our brethren in the Lord need our good examples (Matthew 5:16). It is in this manner we let our light shine before men. In fact, others can "see" us after we are gone.

(3) Dear Readers, will you leave behind you a genuine, devoted Christian family? Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). This preacher was instrumental in saving his own family -- saving himself and seven others (I Peter 3:20-21). Was Noah a failure? Not at all! We would do well if we can manage to save our own families!! Pray that you can do as well as Noah did! One should not become so interested in saving others, that he forgets to save himself! We urge all fathers and mothers to become Christians today (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 15:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4).

(4) Church leaders, will you leave behind some well-trained leaders of the Lord's church who will be able to carry on the work of the Lord? Listen to Paul: "And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Elders should understand that they will need successors; they should go about seeing that there are trained men who can carry on the Lord's church after they have retired, or died (I Timothy 3:7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4). Leaders of God's people are always necessary. Work, therefore, to have qualified men ready to assume their duty and responsibility.

(5) Friends, neighbors, will you leave behind words of wisdom and instruction planted in the minds of your children and grandchildren which can sustain them in a crisis? This is seed-planting time! Each is building meaningful memories now. Will your children remember some word of advice, or instruction, or suggestion after your departure?

How often do you recall what your father or mother said?

(6) Is the world made better as a result of your having lived here? Or, is it made worse? Is the church of the Lord in your community made better because of your efforts and your life? Or, has the church been made worse? Have you sown discord? Have you sown peace and harmony? How will you be remembered? as a sorehead? a grouch? a fault-finder? a peacemaker? (Proverbs 6:16-19; Matthew 5:9; Philippians 1:27; I Corinthians 1:10).

Joshua left a wonderful example! "And Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and had known all the work of Jehovah, that he had wrought for Israel" (Joshua 24:31). These wonderful words are incorporated in the Holy Bible for our learning (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). Hence, Joshua must have been held in high esteem at the time of his death, being 110 years of age (Joshua 24:29).

(8) If you have never as yet obeyed the gospel of Christ, you may be leaving behind your last opportunity to hear and obey the truth of God (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). There is no second chance for those who are dead. "Purgatory" is the figment of the imagination; it has no support in your Bible. In a figure, Solomon stated it in these words: "... If a tree falls toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3).

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

"A Peculiar People"

Mike Brumley

What was it about that band of people whom God called his own that made the children of Israel so special? It was simply that the Lord took them -- small in number, weak in power -- and made a people of honor and greatness. Their wealth, their power, the opinions of other nations had nothing to do with it. It was Israel's relationship to God that made her the mighty nation she was.

A constant theme of Scripture is that in every dispensation, the people of God are unique, separate, distinct, and honored. Peter wrote: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people..." (I Peter 2:9). A better translation is that we are "a people for God's own possession." We are "peculiar" only because of our relationship to God.

Occasionally, we drift away from the concept of a "peculiar people." Sometimes we do not want to be different. Our personal and social lives never vary from the lifestyle of any other religious group. And we often do not want to be "peculiar" in the eyes of the religious world. Our idea is that they should look at us as one of them; a religious group not very much different from them. We want to be non-denominational from the standpoint of fitting in well with them. Do we ever come close to thinking that the best thing that can happen is for us to lose our distinctiveness, our uniqueness, our "peculiar" ways?

Whatever we can become is because God possesses us, making us a "peculiar" people. His ownership of us sets the standards. His will for us determines our conduct. His calling to us sets us

Why Mormonism Is A Cult

Continued from page 2

this doctrine.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (I Corinthians 15:29).

What was Paul referring to? Was he saying we ought to be immersed for people who have died and never heard the gospel? No. Some at Corinth doubted the resurrection. Since they had been immersed into the death of Christ, and had been raised with him, if there were no resurrection, there would be none in their immersion. They would have been immersed (or buried), but not raised.

Their immersion would have been for a dead Messiah, not a live one. That is Paul's argument.

Conclusion

The Book of Mormon, and Mormonism, falls short of what the Bible teaches. Since the Holy Spirit knew there would be false religions to arise that would try to introduce false doctrines, he warned the saints not to preach another gospel, even if it came from an angel (Galatians 1:6-9). Mormons would do well to heed that divine warning!

--1490 Campbell St., Jackson, TN 38305.

Continued on page 4

A Mission Report

Elders, Curry Church of Christ

Harvey M. Starling, evangelist of the Curry church in Jasper, Alabama, heads up an extensive program of evangelism and church development in four nations. Starling has preached the gospel in over 40 nations and much of the U.S. He preached 15 years as a local evangelist.

He began preaching in 1951. His first foreign work was in 1969 in the Caribbean and India. After over 1,000 meetings and campaigns in the U.S., he is now concentrating in evangelizing and building congregations in specific cities in Malaysia, India, Jamaica and Trinidad. However, he is scheduled for 12 campaigns in the U.S. in 1989.

His wife, Pat, has assisted him by teaching special ladies' classes and doing personal work.

Charles Baker, one of the Curry elders, said: "Not only have we had an extensive plan to evangelize in specific areas, but we have worked diligently to strengthen and develop the local churches."

Starling has preached in Trinidad and Tobago for a number of years in major campaigns. Today there are some 33 congregations in that nation.

Harvey also has preached the gospel in scores of cities and villages in India, but is now limiting his efforts to Madras and Tiruchirapalli. The Sal Nagar church in Madras may be one of the largest Churches of Christ in India with nearly 300 each Lord's Day. Peter Solomon, the local evangelist, is supported by Curry. The congregation has developed a program of evangelism through preacher-training, gospel meetings, special classes, children's Bible school, ladies' work, helping the poor of the area including lepers, Bible correspondence courses, printing of tracts and books, and Bible distribution.

The Park City church, Fayetteville, Tennessee, supports Daniel Durairajan, an Indian evangelist in Tiruchirapalli, who works with three congregations in the city.

Harvey's schedule calls for some preaching along with training classes, and planning and evaluation sessions with the Indian churches.

Lau Kin Fatt is the Malaysian evangelist in Petaling Jaya, a city of about 400,000 people. The church (established seven years ago) now numbers about 75 and is strong and stable. The men meet regularly to plan how the church can reach the masses. Malaysia is considered a Moslem country and the population is about 15,000,000 with only 14 congregations. The Curry church, with the help of others, supports Kin Fatt, and also assists in other evangelistic efforts in the city.

Starling has preached some ten campaigns in

"A Peculiar People"

Continued from page 3

apart. If there is to be any true greatness for us, it will be because we are God's, honored by and proud of that relationship, distinctive and peculiar.

Like Israel of old, our honor and glory can never come from wealth or power or the opinion of other religious groups. Like Israel of old, it will come to us when we as a church belong to God, with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

--P.O. Box 652, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

Jamaica since 1970, and has conducted a number of Leadership Training Classes and Congregational Development Seminars. The Curry church purchased a large tent seating up to 1,000 people for the Jamaica churches in 1986. It is used regularly.

Starling has done most of his work with the Independence City church near Kingston in recent years. A.A. Walker and Leslie Goode are the local evangelists. Many U.S. brethren have assisted in helping this congregation grow to some 250 in attendance. A building seating 500 was nearing

completion when Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica.

The building roof and beams were destroyed and much damage was done to the interior. Repair work is now underway with the help of many U.S. brethren. Detailed plans are being made for the church to renew efforts to spread the gospel in Kingston in 1989.

Charles Barker and John Dutton are elders at Curry. Charles Bryan is the local evangelist. Average attendance is about 100 each Sunday.

--P.O. Box 2572, Jasper, AL 35501.

The Head And The Heart



Winfred Clark

Brother William Woodson related what Brother N. B. Hardeman said about Brother Gus Nichols, after hearing him in a meeting in Henderson, Tennessee. He said, "You have the ability to not only touch the head, but also the heart." All of us who knew Brother Nichols can easily say "Amen." But, stop and ask yourself just what that means.

For one thing, it means Gus Nichols would preach the truth that men must hear on any subject. He would not waver in this respect. There was not a bone of compromise in his body. However, he was not ugly, nor abrasive in his preaching. He was not in the business of trying to merely show men they might be wrong; he wanted more than all else to see them saved! There was no desire on his part to try to win a personal victory over someone. He was not in competition with anyone. He was not trying to elevate himself, but rather the Lord who died on that

vicious cross. Truly he would preach the truth, and that preaching was done in love for the Lord, and for his word, and also for the souls of men.

His preaching was in the mold of his Master. If the need arose to "rebuke," he could do so. If the need to "correct" arose, he could do so. But, if the wounded of heart needed to be healed, he could just as effectively do that. If the discouraged needed to be lifted, he would and could do that.

Most of us who preach today are very much aware of the need for this degree of balance in our lives and teaching. When and where it is found, a preacher will find no glee in trying to slay brethren "hip and thigh" with one assault after another. There will be no rejoicing to find a problem to publicize, nor glee that something can be made into the "latest issue."

You had better believe a long line of men can be found who now are thinking and saying the same thing. They yearn for the revival of the spirit of Brother Gus Nichols in this regard. They are as concerned about the purity of the church as any men could be. They still believe that there are more than 7,000 in Israel that have not bowed -- and will not bow -- the knee to Baal. They believe that number can be increased when we begin to "reach the hearts as well as the heads."

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Spiritual Steroids

Bob Plunket

It was so exciting in the olympics to see Ben Johnson run the hundred yard dash, breaking records and leaving other great runners behind. People swarmed around him. He was praised as one of the great runners of all times. He received the gold medal. Then came the drug test: it was discovered that Ben Johnson was on steroids. Steroids are dangerous, illegal drugs which can enhance a man's speed, his ability to lift, his physical appearance; but the long-range effects can be devastating to the athlete. He might well have won the race without steroids. Paul said, "They are not crowned except they run lawfully" (II Timothy 2:5).

So many today, like Ben, are running just for the moment. "I want to win at any cost." "I want to be first in spite of what it takes." "I want the edge in this race." So often it is built on pride, vanity, greed for medals and recognition. The Christian goal is not to be first. It is rather to do the best you can do, and to be all you can be. There are five-talent people, and two-talent people, and one-talent people. Jesus taught us to do what we can with what we have.

The church needs to guard against spiritual

"steroids." Many churches today are in the race to be the first and biggest. Others want **recognition** and **honor**. **Emotionalism** is a growth "steroid." Many times it brings results. It affects the feelings of man rather than his will. **Sensationalism** is a growth "steroid." Who can come up with some new gimmick that will attract and excite men? A **man-centered church** is a spiritual growth "steroid." Many churches today are growing, not on Christ, but rather on some dynamic man. The early preachers told those who attempted to worship them, "Stand up, I myself also am a man." **Compromise** is a growth "steroid." **Conforming to the world** is another. Preaching a mere **social gospel** is a church growth "steroid."

These steroids are man-made, and in the long run are deadly to the church. Yes, they bring results. Ben won the race -- but after the testing there was shame, hurt, and dishonor for himself and his country.

Remember: we are not responsible for growth. We are responsible for preaching the word and being Christ-like examples. The rest is up to those who hear, and God.

--110 E. Fourth St., Tuscumbia, AL 35674.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble I...
Words of Truth and soberness."

...rth the
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 12

"Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me"



W. A. Holley

We sincerely suggest that Exodus 20:1-17 be read. These verses condemn idolatry in all its forms. For some reason, man has always resisted God's will and way (Romans 1:18-32). These verses describe the condition of the Gentile nations without God. Read them and weep!

God commanded the Israelites, when they entered Canaan, to stamp out all traces of

idolatry: "Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures" ("their figured stones" -- Albright), "and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down their high places" (Numbers 33:52).

Although such was God's command, it was not many years until Israel was engaged in idol worship. One has but to read the Old Testament to learn these facts. Many kings were instrumental in leading Israel to worship idols.

For example, many Hebrews worshiped "other gods:" Ashera, the goddess of the high places; Baal, the goddess of fertility; and Molock, the goddess of sacrifice, where children were burned. There were many others.

The Greeks also had their gods: Bachus, the god of wine; Apollo, the god of sunlight, music and poetry; and Venus, the goddess of natural productivity, and later, the goddess of love and beauty. Many other gods could be mentioned, but these will suffice.

We raise a question: Are we as far removed from idols as we might think? We think not. We should remember that idols are very corrupting, because one tends to become like the object which he worships.

What are some of the gods of our modern age? Well, there is the god of technology. Countless thousands seen to think that the modern computer, and modern science, can solve all our modern

problems. But such can never be the case. Why? Because man has a spirit and a conscience, and thus he has a sin problem. No computer can solve this problem. The gospel is God's power to solve this problem (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). If one gains the world and loses his soul, he has lost everything (Matthew 16:26).

The god of materialism is everywhere apparent. Thousands upon thousand worship their material possessions: Cars, houses, money, stocks and bonds, and expensive clothing and jewelry, and the like. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). "Mammon" is a word which refers to material riches. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of wealth he may possess (Luke 12:13-21). Money is valuable, but cannot purchase everything (Ecclesiastes 8:8; I Timothy 6:6-18). Hence, "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil."

The god of self is another idol worshiped by many. Do not fall in love with self. It is good to think well of yourself, but do not carry it to an extreme (Romans 12:1-3). Man needs to know that he is totally helpless without God, Jesus Christ, the Lord's church, and the Bible (John 15:1-7). A Greek fable tells of Narcissus, who fell in love with his image as reflected in a fountain. For shame! No man is truly free, until he recognizes his dependence upon his Maker (John 8:32; Romans 1:18 ff.).

Not only so, but there is a sex-cult in our nation today. In fact, sex has become "big business" to millions of people. In magazines, on TV, in the newspapers, on billboards, sex is paraded and extolled at terrific price to the general public. To some there is nothing but sex! The god of sex is being worshiped each day. Special lifestyles promote sex, whether it is contrary to Biblical teaching or not (Genesis 2:24-26; Matthew 19:3-9). Efforts are being made to expose as much of the human body as possible. In fact, we are not very far from rank, stark nudity!! (I Timothy 2:9-15). Both male and female bodies are being used to sell beer, wine, automobiles, houses and land. We have lost all sense of shame: Homosexual and lesbian relationships are being accepted as "normal" rela-

tionships today; but God's word strongly condemns all such (Genesis 19:5; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 23:17; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-11).

The god of sports is another idol worshiped by the millions. Some church members do not mind missing the Lord's assembly, often traveling hundreds of miles and spending hundreds of dollars, to attend sports events. Is there no priority? Does the Lord say nothing about putting his kingdom first? (Matthew 6:33). My brethren, these things ought not so to be!! Heaven is far more important than any sports event!! Do not lead others astray (I Corinthians 10:31-33).

Others worship the god of power. Their aim is to control men at almost any cost. Some will lie, steal, and misrepresent truth, using any deceptive method to gain power over others. This is one reason we have so much fraud in our elections. The object is to win -- no matter what the cost, even if one has to crucify others in the process! In the New Testament Diotrephes was such a man (III John 9-11). Read this passage and see.

The Devil is another idol whom many worship. Jesus rejected Satan's overtures, refusing to worship him. Satan showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." Satan urged Jesus to fall down and worship him; but Jesus refused, saying, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan has his own churches (Revelation 2:9; 3:9), his own doctrines (I Timothy 4:1-3), and his own ministers (preachers) II Corinthians 11:13-15). Back of devil worship is atheism in all of its blackness and darkness. An album by **Venom** contains these words:

"We are possessed by all that's civil;
the death of God we demand.

We spit at the virgin you worship,
and sit at Lord Satan's left hand."

How shameful! how disgraceful! Young people do not need to her such Rock Music. It is an attack on Christ, the church, and on the Holy Bible.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)
 "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
 --Acts 26:25

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From The Question Box

Dean Fugett

QUESTION: "Some declare the old law of Moses has not been fulfilled, because the wolf has not eaten grass like a cow and people have not beaten their swords into plow shares yet."

ANSWER: The Old Testament scriptures, describing the peace that exists "within the kingdom of Christ" are Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 65:25. The reference to the plow/shares is found in Isaiah 2:1-5.

Those who argue that these things have not been fulfilled argue with the New Testament writers, not with me. The New Testament writers were inspired by God (II Timothy 3:15-17; I Corinthians 2:12-14); and therefore, they are right. Any modern opponents are wrong.

Read Isaiah 2:1-5. Jesus used similar words in Luke 24:46-48 and Acts 1:6-8. Physical weapons of war are not used by the church today as they were used by Old Testament Israel. The church grows, not by carnal weapons, but by peaceful teaching. Old Testament Israel lived and survived by warfare. We in New Testament "Israel" (the church) live by loving our enemies, praying for them, and teaching them the will of God.

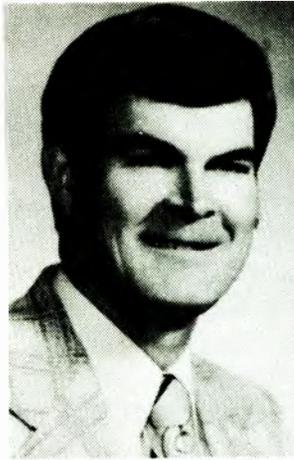
Look at Isaiah 11:1. When Paul was preaching at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:14-23), he referred to this promise (verse 23). I believe Paul knew what he was talking about, don't you? He said this was fulfilled in Christ.

Note Isaiah 11:2. See the coming of the Holy Spirit on Christ (Matthew 3:16).

After reading Isaiah 11:1-9, look at verse 10: "And in that day . . ." What day? The day that the events of verses 1-9 are fulfilled! What day is he talking about? Verse 10 says the day when "the

Continued On Page 3

Container Or Content?



Ray Hawk

are going to hell. The argument is, Jesus gave the apostles one container and said, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Matthew 26:27).

Harvey Pearson, who immersed me into Christ, told me that most, if not all error, can be answered by taking the context in which the passage is found and carefully reading it. Most error perverts the very proof text it is supposedly found in or the parallel passages of that proof text. A careful reading will bring that out.

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28).

Jesus gave them a container. They were all to drink from that one container. What was in the container? Whatever Jesus gave them in that container, they were all to drink of it. Did they drink the container or from what was in the container? Whatever they were to drink, Jesus said of it, "This is my blood." Was the container Jesus' blood? The parallel passage in Mark makes it even clearer, if Matthew's account isn't clear enough.

"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:23-25).

Notice, he gave the container to them: and they all drank from it. And he said unto them, **This is my blood** of the new testament . . . I will drink no more of the **fruit of the vine** . . . I drink it new in the kingdom of God. They drank the "it" that Jesus gave them. Did they drink the container? The "it" which he gave them and of which they drank, is called "my blood." The "my blood" is called "the fruit of the vine." A knowledge of English grammar will clear up what Jesus bound. He bound the fruit of the vine which was in the container, not the container itself.

One container might be sufficient for twelve men to drink from, but 400-500 people could not all partake from one. There is nothing about Jesus' refilling the container. They all drank of what was in the container given to them by Jesus. If the gentleman who is trying to bind the container will be consistent, if he binds the one container, he will have to bind that everyone must partake of what is in the container without refilling it. Most of those churches that insist that we use one container actually have TWO! They have a large one that contains the fruit of the vine and a smaller one that folks drink from. As the smaller container is emp-

Last week I received a booklet in the mail from a preacher. I do not know the man nor why he sent the booklet to me. Among other things, the book tries to prove that Jesus commands that the church use one container, when serving the Lord's supper or communion -- or we

ried, they refill it from the second. So, they aren't a one container faith, but a two container one.

If people want to drink the fruit of the vine from one container, that is their privilege. However, Jesus did not come to bind one container for the fruit of the vine, any more than he came to bind one plate for the unleavened bread, or an upper room to partake of the Lord's supper. These are incidentals. One may as well bind the position they used to partake as to bind the container. Isn't it strange how people will try to bind their human judgment upon others rather than give a "thus saith the Lord." Strange indeed.

Conclusion

In 1989, let us reexamine our faith. Let us make sure we believe what the Bible says, not what we think it says (II Corinthians 13:5). Remember, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

--1490 Campbell St., Jackson, TN 38305.

Paul's Concern



Winfred Clark

could cause them to change so quickly. Yes, you could say he is **CONCERNED**.

1. He is concerned about the corruption of the gospel.

You will see this in the word "pervert." They have added circumcision to the gospel. But if they can add one thing, then they could also add other things of their liking. In so doing they are making the gospel into something that is opposite from what it really is. They will have to deny some things, add some things and change some things. All of this shows their lack of satisfaction with the gospel.

2. He is concerned about the confusion they cause.

Some false teachers have "troubled" those of Galatia. They have unsettled their minds by their perversion of the gospel. They would call it another of the same kind so as to confuse. Is not this what Satan did in Eden? Did he not try to unsettle the mind of Eve so as to mislead her?

3. He is concerned about the change they made.

This is found in the term "removed." They have changed their religious position. They have to undergo a change about the gospel, for they move to something else. They in turn would have to change about the grace of God; for grace is related

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Who/What Is A "Christian"

Yarbrough Leigh

Many and varied are the answers which men give to this question. Even among learned men, and leaders in the various religious communions, it would be impossible to find a unanimous view as to the correct answer. All of this points up the unique, irreplaceable function of the Holy Scriptures; namely: to give an authoritative, infallible answer to matters pertaining to the faith of Jesus Christ. The Bible is the only source of a correct answer to the question: "Who/What Is A Christian." Let us look at just a few examples in the New Testament which will help in finding the answer.

A Christian Is A "Disciple"

In giving the "Great Commission," Jesus said to his disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach (KJV) or "make disciples of" (ASV) "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). From this, we know that a Christian is one who has been led by the gospel message to become a follower, or a disciple of the Lord; and, in consequence of this conviction, has committed himself to that discipleship in being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in obedience to our Lord's instruction.

We read in Acts 11:26 that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." These passages are sufficient to demonstrate that the terms "Christian" and "disciple" are synonymous. One who is not a "disciple" of Christ cannot be a "Christian" in that non-disciple state.

What, If Any,

Are The Terms Of Discipleship?

We find some light on this question in John 8:31-32, 34-36, as follows: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free... Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." From this we learn that a "true," or a "genuine," or one who is "indeed," (i.e.: "who is in fact") a disciple, is one who not only hears and begins to follow Jesus, but one who "continues in his word." And, it is this kind of discipleship that leads the Lord to "set us free from bondage to sin." Only the Son can set us free from sin; and he frees from sin those who are his "disciples indeed" --

Paul's Concern

Continued From Page 2

to the gospel. But if they change concerning the gospel, and grace, they will also find themselves changed concerning God; for he is the one who called them by the gospel into the benefits of his grace. Yes, there had been quite a change!

When you look at these things, you are not too surprised to see Paul's concern. He had reason to be concerned -- and so should we be concerned!

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

those who keep on following him. This sheds light on the question: "Who/What Is A Christian."

Although Jesus was speaking within the framework of the especially dangerous times of his highly controversial personal ministry; nonetheless, his words recorded by Luke in his account of the Gospel give further light on the answer to our question: "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27, 33). Read the context in which these two verses are found (Luke 14:25-33) to get a more full view of what it means to "bear one's cross and follow Jesus!" You will see that the cost of "discipleship" can be very high, indeed; even to forsaking the approval and companionship of closest and dearest among family and friends!

Many additional passages could be cited pertaining to "discipleship," but these will suffice to show that a "disciple" is one who obeys and follows the leadership and example of Jesus, no matter what it costs in material things, and even in the bonds that we have cherished which tie us to family and loved ones.

A Christian Is One Who Has Been Cleansed By The Blood Of Christ

Speaking of the "cup" in the Lord's Supper, Jesus said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Again, Paul wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7); and many other passages, as well. Also, after becoming Christians, it is this blood of Christ which keeps us clean; as note: "But if walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Therefore, a "Christian" is one who has been cleansed, and keeps on being cleansed, by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for our redemption -- the purchase price for our souls (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:14; I Corinthians 6:20).

But, what is necessary on our part to receive that cleansing? This very question was raised on Pentecost by men who had been convinced of their error in calling for the crucifixion of Jesus (Acts 2:37), as they asked of Peter and the other apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" To these men, who had already become convinced that "God hath made that same Jesus," whom they in a sense had crucified, "both Lord and Christ;" the apostles answered: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). And, in response, Peter was answering precisely according to the instruction he had received pertaining to the "remission of sins." Luke recorded our Lord's instruction on that point, in these words: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that

repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"(Luke 24:46-47). On that Pentecost, in Jerusalem, the Spirit came upon the apostles in keeping with the Lord's promise. Peter preached from the prophets that it had been written that Christ "must suffer, and be raised the third day" (Acts 2:14-36). When men believed his message, and wanted to know what they must do, he answered, still using the language of the Lord: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Summarizing

A Christian is one who has received with unquestioning faith the good news of redemption provided by divine grace by the sacrificial death of Christ and his resurrection the third day, has confessed that faith, and has committed himself to Christ in obeying his command of baptism in his name for the remission of sins; one who has become a "disciple indeed," continuing in his word; and, denying self, has taken up his cross and is following Jesus, having repented of all rebellion against God.

--P.O. Box 26156, Birmingham, AL 35226.

From The Question Box

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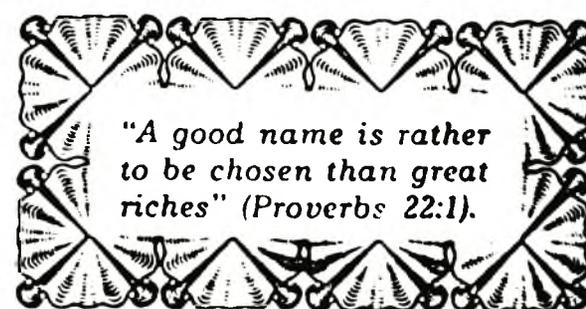
root of Jesse" would be the focus point of the Gentiles. Now, read Acts 11:18. Aged Simeon, in Jerusalem, referred this to Jesus (Luke 2:42). Paul quoted these verses (1 and 11) in Romans 15:12 and said it applied to the things of his (Paul's) days.

Other verses could be given; but how many times does God have to say something for it to be true?

As I said before, I believe God knew what he was saying through Paul and the New Testament writers. And if they quote the Old Testament verses as being fulfilled, who am I to disagree with them?

Many people misunderstand the Old Testament prophecies. They look for cows and lions to eat together literally. They are just like the Jews of Jesus' day who rejected him because they didn't understand the prophecies about him and his kingdom.

--1820 Cedar Grove Rd., Cave City, AR 72521.



Salvation And The Great Commission

Rod Rutherford

A Vital Question

The most important question in the world is the question, "What must I do to be saved?" How one answers this question will determine whether he spends eternity in heaven, or in hell. Our Lord Jesus Christ very clearly, plainly and simply answered this crucial question for us in the final commission given to his disciples before his ascension back to heaven. Let us turn our attention to the three passages where the Great Commission of our Lord is located so that we may learn from him what we must do to have eternal life.

Man Sinned

The scriptures teach that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Since "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and the "death" spoken of has reference to eternal separation from God, in hell, the eternal fire (Matthew 25:41, 46), the "second death" (Revelation 21:8), then all who have sinned, ought by the demands of justice to be confined eternally to hell.

God's Grace

God, however, loves man in spite of man's rebellion (sin). He desires to save man from the punishment he deserves. Therefore, God devised the plan of salvation through which he could still be just, but at the same time, show mercy. "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" (John 3:16). God initiated his plan solely on his own grace and goodness, not because man deserved it. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). Romans 5:6-8 also expresses the same thought, as do many other verses. In the light of this, we can say with the inspired apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." If the above verses teach anything at all, they teach that man could never have merited God's saving him; that he could not have (in any way) ever atoned for his sins by his own goodness; that without the gracious intervention of God on his behalf, he would be doomed to suffer the just punishment for his sins in the hell created for the devil and his angels; and that man could never earn, merit, or deserve his salvation. Works of human righteousness (of man's devising) are completely out of the picture as pertains to man's salvation (cf. Titus 3:4-7).

Death of Christ

Man's salvation was made possible when Jesus died on the cross in his place as sin-bearer, and sin offering (II Corinthians 5:19-21). The death of Christ for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection from the dead on the third day constitute the foundation of the gospel of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4), and man's only hope for salvation. Christ, then, is the only Savior, man's only way to God and to eternal life (John 8:24; 14:6; Hebrews 5:8,9; Acts 4:11-12). This is why it is imperative that the gospel be preached to every nation, every creature, the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 15:15-16; Luke 24:44-47).

Sinners Must Hear

The question next arises as to how man may receive the salvation from his sins with the resulting promise of eternal life which God, by his grace, has made possible. The Bible is clear, plain, and simple. (One would hardly expect it to be otherwise on such an important and vital issue). After his death, burial and resurrection, our Lord gave marching orders to his disciples. We have a clear, concise account of this in Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus, our Lord, having stated that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," next commanded, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen."

Must Learn And Be Baptized

Now, please note that the Gospel was to be taught to all nations. Christianity is a "taught religion," unlike Judaism, wherein one was born into a covenant relationship with God by physical birth and then had to be taught God's will. One must hear the Gospel and understand it in order to have faith in it (Romans 10:17). Also, please observe that those who were taught the Gospel were to be baptized.

Mark 16:15-16

Let us now turn our attention to the second account of our Lord's commission. It is found in Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Believe And Be Baptized

Please notice that the command once again is to go with the gospel. It must be preached in order for men to hear it. Those who hear it must then believe and be baptized in order to be saved.

What Jesus Did Not Say

The Lord did not say, "He that believes is saved, and shall be baptized" -- as many modern folk actually believe and teach. They thereby imply that one is saved by belief alone without baptism; but the Lord clearly placed both belief and baptism before salvation from one's sins.

Sometimes those unwilling to accept the simple statement of our Lord insist that, "He didn't say, 'He that believeth not, and is baptized not, shall be condemned.'" But this would make the Lord redundant; for, if one does not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he is lost already (John 3:18, 36), and the matter of baptism is completely irrelevant to him!

Luke 24:46-47

Let us now turn our attention to the account of the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Luke 24:45-47: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Repentance And Remission

Here we have the foundation facts of the gospel: Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures

and arose from the dead the third day (cf. I Corinthians 15:1-4). Based on this, "repentance" and "remission," or forgiveness of sins, should be preached in his name to all nations. Here we see the gospel must be preached; and those who respond in repentance are promised remission of sins.

We must not do as the Jehovah's Witnesses (so-called) and other cults do, and take only part of what the Bible teaches on a subject. Nor dare we do (as so many cults do) and attempt to array one scripture against another. But we will endeavor to see the whole picture presented by God in his word pertaining to man's salvation. Therefore, when we place these three accounts side by side, we will see the following elements:

1. Christ's disciples are to take the gospel to every creature in the whole world.
2. The gospel and only the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9) must be preached.
3. Those who hear the gospel will respond by: a. Believing. b. Repenting of sins. c. Being baptized.
4. The result to those who respond in this way is that they are SAVED, or have their sins remitted (forgiven).

"By Grace Through Faith"

The fact that our Lord has required that we must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repent of our sins, and be baptized in order to be saved, does not in any way nullify the grace of God. God has provided man's salvation as a gift (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8); but man must reach out and receive God's gracious gift. He does this by responding in the manner described in the accounts of the Great Commission of our Lord as discussed above.

Sinners Move

Dear reader, are you saved? Do you have eternal life? Salvation from your past sins and the promise of eternal life with God in Heaven can be yours!

Jesus has made it possible by his death, burial and resurrection. You must, however, comply with the simple terms laid down by him in his Great Commission. Will you not do so without delay?

--4400 Knight Arnold, Rd., Memphis, TN 38118-2948.



FAILURE TO HEAR
ABOUT CHRIST WILL
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TO YOUR SOUL!



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Words Of Truth

"I am
Word

forth the

Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 13

The State Of The Righteous Dead

F. G. Allen

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following on "The State Of The Righteous Dead" is from an old book entitled "The Old Path Pulpit," by the late brother F. G. Allen. This material was used by my father, the late Gus Nichols, in his study and in his preaching. I believe, as did he, that this clearly presents the New Testament teaching on this theme. I have supplied some of the scriptural references.

--Flavil H. Nichols, Editor.]

The State Of The Righteous Dead

F. G. Allen

"Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." - Hebrews ii: 14, 15.

In the New Testament there are two distinct classes of texts referring to the state of the righteous dead. These appear to be antagonistic. No theory can be correct that does not harmonize them. No theory that I have yet seen, except the one here presented, does this. Hence I can accept none. If that which I advance does not do it, it likewise will be unworthy of acceptance.

Previous to the death of Jesus there are several allusions to what is called the intermediate state. Hades expressed the state of the dead, without regard to their condition. At death the good and the bad alike went into hades. The rich man lifted up his eyes in hades, being in torment. Christ was in hades while his body was in the grave. David, referring to him, as quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, said: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). Hades included both paradise and Tartarus. These were its departments. That was the abode of the righteous; this of the wicked. To this the rebellious; this of the wicked. To this the rebellious angels were cast down, to await the final judgment of the last day (II Peter ii:4). Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). This was but a Jewish expression for paradise. Jesus said to the penitent thief: "this day shalt thou be with me in

paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jesus, Lazarus and the thief, then, all went to paradise at death. But Jesus and the rich man went to hades. The place of the rich man was a place of torment; paradise, where Jesus went, was a place of "comfort." It follows, therefore, that both of these places were in hades. Since these representatives of the two classes -- the righteous and the unrighteous -- went to these distinct departments of hades, it follows that all the race went to the same places.

Christ did not go to the Father while his body was in the grave. On the day of the resurrection he said to Mary: "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Paradise, at that time, then, as we shall hereafter see, was not the dwelling place of the Most High.

From all of these statements it follows conclusively that previous to the ascension and coronation of Jesus, there was an intermediate state of the righteous dead called paradise, but which was not heaven itself, the holy habitation of God. Here the souls of the righteous abode in "comfort" (Hebrews 6:20) awaiting the dedication of heaven by the blood of their "forerunner" and High Priest, Christ Jesus.

Before the ascension of Christ every passage in the word of God, both Old Testament and New, that alludes to the state of the righteous dead, recognizes this fact. After the ascension it is not once recognized in the New Testament. Nor can any passage after that time be reconciled with that idea. This is significant.

Having observed the teaching upon this point previous to the ascension, let us now notice the other class and see how uniformly they indicate a different state of things.

When Stephen was stoned he looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said: "Lord Jesus receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). The natural inference is that he expected the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, to receive his spirit. This would indicate that his soul was not going to paradise, as the souls of the righteous had been doing from the beginning; or, if so, that paradise now included the dwelling place of God and of His glorified Son. What we here find so plainly indicated, we find

confirmed as we advance.

To the Corinthians Paul says: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens . . . Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:1-8). Here it is clearly affirmed that when one is absent from the body he is present with the Lord. The body is represented as our home while we remain in it; but when we depart from it, we are at home with the Lord. This body-house is exchanged for a house not made with hands. And this house is in the heavens. It is not, then, in paradise, unless paradise has been removed from hades to "heaven itself," (Hebrews 7:24) as Paul expresses it. And this house not made with hands, which we get in exchange for the body, is "with the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:8). And the Lord is at "the right hand of the Father." Hence Paul's general statement corresponds with Stephen's vision and prayer.

Another passage bearing upon the point is found in the same Epistle. Paul says: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth,) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (II Corinthians xii: 2-4).

Paul speaks this of himself. It is not my purpose to dwell upon the teaching of this wonderful passage. (That is done in another sermon). I only wish to call attention to the fact that Paul found paradise in the "third heaven." He was "caught up into paradise," "even to the third heavens." The Jews had three heavens. The first was the atmospheric regions about us: "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament heaven" (Genesis 7:8). The second is the upper canopy, the place of the

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--Acts 26:25

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Flavil H. Nichols . . . Editor

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The State Of The Righteous Dead

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heavenly bodies: "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth" (Genesis 1:16-17). The third was the dwelling-place of Jehovah. Macknight says: "In the language of the Jews, the *third heaven* is the seat of God, and of the holy angels, into which Christ ascended after his resurrection, but which is not the object of men's senses as the other heavens are." Paul makes paradise and the third heaven one and the same. Therefore paradise was *at that time* in heaven itself, the holy habitation of God and the angels. Here the Lord reigns at the right hand of God. Hence Paul found in his experience what was indicated at Stephen's death, and in every other passage after the ascension of Jesus.

Previous to the glorification of Christ, paradise was in hades. Every passage in the Bible so teaches. *Now* it is in heaven. Every passage after the resurrection so teaches. Heaven and hades are two very distinct places. They stand out in bold antithesis in the Bible. How, then, shall we reconcile these two distinct classes of clear Scripture texts, one of which locates paradise, the home of the righteous, in hades, and the other as clearly locates it in heaven itself, in the presence of the Lord and the holy angels? I know of but one theory on which it can be done. This I now submit as my main proposition:

Paradise was the abode of the righteous in hades till the ascension and glorification of Jesus; then it was removed to heaven, and that department of hades was abolished.

I now invite your attention to a few reasons for affirming this proposition. For several reasons Paradise, the intermediate state of the righteous, was located in hades till the glorification of Christ. Till then it was a necessity. After that the necessity

no longer existed.

1. My first argument is that --

Previous to the glorification of Christ there was no absolute remission of sins.

On this point the great Apostle to the Gentiles clearly testifies. In the tenth chapter of Hebrews he says:

"For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:1-4).

Here it is asserted --

(1) That the sacrifices of the law could never make the worshipers perfect.

(2) That the worshipers still had a conscience of sins.

(3) That, by repeated sacrifice, there was a remembrance made again every year of the sins for which sacrifice had been previously offered.

(4) That it was not possible for such sacrifices to take away sins.

In the eleventh verse the Apostle adds: "And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins."

All this was said in full view of the relation of these sacrifices to the atonement of Christ. With all their typical significance, and borrowed virtue from the blood of Jesus, they could not take away sins. They could not reach the conscience. As this point is of special significance and importance in the establishing of my proposition, I invite your attention to the words of that prince of Biblical critics, Prof. J. W. McGarvey. In his Commentary on Acts xiii:39, he says:

"The assumption is not that justification can not be procured by *works of law*, for this is equally true under Christ; but that those under the law of Moses did not obtain remission of sins at all.

"Paul argues this assumption at length in the ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews. The only provisions in the law at all connected with the remission of sins were its sacrifices, and he asserts of them: 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.' It can not be rightly assumed that he contemplated these sacrifices as considered apart from their typical meaning; for he makes no such distinction. He takes them just as he finds them, with all that belongs to them when offered in good faith, and makes the assertion that it was not possible for them to take away sins."

One of the main points of dissimilarity between the old covenant and the new, is that in the new our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. Under the old they were continually remembered; but under the new they are "remembered against us no more forever."

The blood of Jesus Christ alone can cleanse the soul from sin; and it had not actual cleansing power till with it an atonement was made in the holy place on high. The efficacy of the blood of Christ is because of the atonement. Apart from this His blood was of no more value than that of others. Hence His blood had no efficacy before the atonement. The blessings derived from it, therefore, were prospective and borrowed. But when Christ, as our High Priest, with His own

blood, entered the most holy place, and atoned for the sins of the world, its efficacy reached back to Adam, as well as forward to the end of time. The forgiveness of the Jewish and patriarchal ages was only prospective, but now it becomes actual. The account that had been kept and carried forward year after year was now cancelled. In past ages God promised His children remission; but it was a promise enjoyed in prospect, not in realization. There still remained a "conscience of sins." Hence Paul says that while those ancient worthies obtained a good report through faith, they received not the thing promised, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40). It is affirmed that they died without being made perfect, and that they could not be made perfect apart from the better thing which God provided for us. Hence their perfection awaited that "better thing;" and that is the consummation or perfection secured by the blood of atonement. This is clearly stated in the ninth chapter of Hebrews: "And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (verse 15). Here it is clearly stated that Christ's death was for the remission of transgressions under the first covenant. Had they been remitted before His death, His death could not have been for their remission. Thus it was by His own death, as a means, that Christ remitted the transgressions under former dispensations, in order that the called -- God's faithful people -- might receive the eternal inheritance promised.

In the third chapter of Romans, Paul affirms that God set forth Christ "to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God" (verse 25). Here it is clearly stated that the sins committed previous to the shedding of the blood of Christ were *passed over*; and that now His blood is a propitiation for them, as well as for all sin till the end of time. The annual summing up of the sins of the people, and carrying them forward another year, to be remembered again at that time, and so on continually, shows how they were "passed over," till the death of Christ.

These scriptures clearly establish the fact that previous to the ascension and glorification of Christ, there was no absolute remission of sins. Those dying in faith in those ages obtained no absolute remission. They were not made perfect, but died awaiting the fulfillment of the promise of both through the atonement of Christ. Without this perfection by absolute remission, they could not go to heaven. No imperfection or unremitted sin can stand accepted in the presence of God. Hence an intermediate state of repose for the souls of the righteous till that perfection could be obtained was a necessity. They could not go into the immediate presence of God till made perfect. They could not be made perfect till the atonement was made. Hence their abode in paradise in hades was a necessity till Christ removed their disabilities and dedicated heaven by the blood of atonement.

2. My second argument is based on

The High Priesthood Of Christ

In the tabernacle there were two distinct departments -- the holy place and the most holy. That typified the church; this, heaven. The high

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priest alone went into the most holy place. The common priests could not go behind the vail separating it from the holy place. Into this the high priest went once a year, on the great day of atonement, and made atonement for the people. In the eighth chapter of Hebrews, Paul argues that Christ has not gone into the holy place made with hands, as did the earthly high priests, but into heaven itself, with His own blood, to make an atonement for the sins of the world. Then, as our High Priest, He is our "forerunner." Hence the Apostle, in speaking of our hope which anchors within the vail -- that is, behind the vail -- in the most holy place, says: "Whether as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 7:24). That being true, it follows that Christ must be the first to enter "heaven itself." As "forerunner" He had to be the first. As High Priest He must enter the holy place and dedicate it with His own blood, before it could be entered by others. The blood of atonement must be sprinkled behind the vail before it was opened as the terminus of the "new and living way." If any went there before Christ, He could not be their "forerunner." It follows, therefore, that God's ancient people could not go to heaven till Christ was glorified, and made the atonement. Hence an intermediate state in paradise was a necessity till that momentous event in the history of the world's redemption. This was most strikingly illustrated -- typified -- when the blood of atonement was shed. To this we invite your special consideration:

The holy place in the temple typified the church; the most holy, heaven. Between these there hung an impenetrable vail, behind which the worshipers in the holy place could neither see nor go. "This signifying," says Paul, "that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing" (Hebrews 9:8). The thing "signified," as I understand it, is this: that the way between earth and heaven was closed while the first tabernacle stood -- while that typical religion lasted. As God's worshiping children could not go behind this vail, so they could not enter the holy place on high. And now do you remember what occurred when Jesus died? Do you remember how that when He bowed His sacred head in death and said, "It is finished," the mountains were rent, the graves of the dead were opened, and *the vail in the temple was rent in two from top to bottom?* (Matthew 27:50-54). This showed that the vail which hitherto had separated between earth and heaven was taken out of the way. This suggested to Paul the following striking language: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a *new and living way*, which He hath consecrated for us, *through the vail*, that is to say, *his flesh*" (Hebrews 10:19).

The vail in the temple, separating the holy from the most holy place, typified the body of Jesus, which had to be "broken" before the way into the holy place on high was "made manifest." But now, through the "rent vail of his flesh," we have a "new and living way" into "heaven itself," whither our "forerunner is for us entered." It follows, therefore, that the righteous could not enter heaven till this new and living way was prepared. Hence the intermediate state in paradise, a department of hades, was a necessity till the rent vail of the tabernacle, as a type, found its fulfillment in the

offering of the blood of Jesus. As our sacrifice His blood was shed; as our High Priest He with it made an atonement. The offering was made on earth; the atonement was made in heaven.

When Jesus, as our High Priest, entered heaven with the offering made on Calvary and dedicated it with His own blood, the efficacy of that atonement reached back over all the past, and accomplished the perfection of which the faithful had received the promise. The way was now prepared, and their forerunner entered. Hence the obstructions and their disabilities were removed. The necessity for the intermediate state, therefore, no longer remained. Since the necessity no longer existed, we should expect its discontinuance. That it ceased to exist we have seen to be a clearly stated matter of New Testament teaching. To the removal of these long-standing disabilities we understand the Apostle to refer in our text. Read it again, as it appears in the Common Version:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Christ took upon Himself our humanity in order to die. He alone was born to die. We are born to live; but He was born to die. Here two objects are distinctly stated as having been accomplished in His death:

1. He "destroyed" the devil. That is, He broke his power; vanquished him. That is the meaning of the word destroy as here used. When Jesus died He went into hades. Its ponderous gates closed upon Him. He was a prisoner within its gates, and Satan held the keys. Could he have held Jesus as his prisoner, as he had held all the rest of the human race, the story of the world's redemption would never have been told. Satan was clamorous to get the Son of God into the grave -- under the dominion of death. He little dreamed that, in this, Jesus would only stoop to conquer. He voluntarily went within. He feared not to meet Satan in his own dominion. When, on the third day, He came forth, He wrested from Satan the keys of hades, unlocked its ponderous gates, and came forth a triumphant conqueror. Not only so, but He "dragged the captor captive." Hence He says to John, on the Isle of Patmos: "I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Revelation 1:18). Hitherto Satan had carried them, but now they suspend from the girdle of the Son of God. Hence in His own death the Son of God destroyed the power of Satan over the dominion of death.

2. He delivered them who, through fear of death, were during their life-time subject to bondage. You will observe that those delivered were not living at the time. Their earthly life was a thing of the past. Their deliverance was after death. During their life they were subject to bondage. This bondage was due to their fear of death. They feared death; and this fear amounted to a bondage of the spirit. The future was not clear to them as it is to us. Hence they enjoyed not the freedom of mind and spirit in regard to it that the informed child of God may now enjoy. Now this people who went into the dominion of death with this bondage of spirit were delivered. Delivered from what? We can see but

one thing from which deliverance was possible. They were delivered from their condition at that time. They were delivered from hades. They had long been waiting the finished work of redemption, and, now that the glad hour had come, they followed in the train of their conquering King and Lord; and paradise in hades is eternally no more. The rent vail in the temple, at the death of Jesus, showed that the way into heaven was opened up through this "new and living way;" and no sooner is the way opened than it is filled by the thronging hosts that in the paradise of hades had been waiting a way of access to the Father.

As another evidence of this, your attention is directed to an expression in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. In describing the scenes of the last day, it is said that death and hades shall deliver up the dead that were in them; and death and hades shall be cast into the lake of fire. The whole tenantry of hades go into the lake of fire. Hence there are no righteous among them. But all the righteous were in hades previous to the death and glorification of Jesus. It follows, therefore, that the righteous have been or will be delivered from hades before the judgment day. Its wicked only remain. We conclude, therefore, that hades delivered up its righteous at the call of its conquering King and Lord, when He had through His death prepared the way.

The immense confusion of thought on this subject is due, I think, to the fact that it has not been studied in its relation to the death and glorification of Jesus. We are well aware of the blunders of the sectarian world in regard to the conditions of salvation, growing out of the fact that they were changed by the death and glorification of Christ. They go back to a former dispensation to find the conditions of salvation. By blending these with the Gospel of Christ they make everlasting confusion. Have we not been committing a like blunder in regard to the condition of the dead? Every passage of the word of God relied upon to prove that there now exists an intermediate state of the righteous dead, so far as we have seen, belongs to a former dispensation. Not a passage under the Christian dispensation hints at such a thing. This should make one very suspicious of his conclusions. We have failed to consider the effect of the death of Christ on the dead, as well as the living. It affected heaven, earth, and hell. With these facts all before us, we can readily see how it was that Lazarus and the thief went to paradise; and yet to be absent from the body now, is to be present with the Lord. We can see how paradise has been removed to the "third heaven," where God and the Savior and the holy angels dwell.

Objections Considered

But I now invite your attention to some objections that may be urged against the theory. For while the arguments may appear conclusive, yet if you have in mind what you regard as irreconcilable objections, you are still in a state of doubt and uncertainty. I will, therefore, notice the most plausible objections I have ever heard urged against the position.

1. Ten days after the ascension of Christ, Peter said, "for David ascended not into the heavens." From this it has been argued that David was not in

Continued on page 4

The State Of The Righteous Dead

Continued from page 3

heaven at that time; and if he was not, of course others were not. And this was after the glorification of Christ. Hence this fact refutes the theory. We grant that this would have some force, but would be by no means conclusive, if Peter had been speaking simply of the spirit of David. But this was not the case. On the contrary, his argument includes *the body* of David. He is showing why the language of David concerning his soul not being in hades, and his body not seeing corruption, did not apply to him, but to Christ. Hence he reminds them that David was dead and buried, and that his tomb was among them. They had all seen it and knew it. Hence his body did see corruption. He did not ascend to heaven at death, for his grave, containing his body, had been among them since he was gathered to his fathers. The statement, therefore, does not refer to his spirit apart from his body; hence it has no bearing on our position.

2. Another objection is that it obviates the necessity for the final judgment. The argument is that if we go to heaven at death, the question of our eternal abode in heaven is settled. And if this be settled at death, there is no necessity for a final judgment. But I can see no force in this. The same objection might be urged against the old paradise in hades. When Lazarus went to Paradise and was "comforted," carried there by the angels, was not the question of his eternal happiness in heaven settled? Would he have to wait till judgment day to know whether he would be saved or lost? Certainly not. No one thus contends. Then our theory does not affect that question any more than the old one. The fact is, the final judgment is not a day to determine whether men will be saved or lost. That question is settled at death, whether our theory be true or not. It is a day of the final summing up of all the consequences of our lives, and a vindication of God's righteousness in dealing with them as He has. It is a day of the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5). It decides the size of one's cup of bliss for all eternity, but not the fact that one is to have a cup. It is not a day to decide whether one's name is to be put into the Lamb's book of life -- the names of the righteous are already there (Revelation 20:15) -- but it decides the degree of honor to be conferred on these names. One can come from the immediate presence of the Lord to learn the results of that final reckoning, as well as from the old paradise in hades. Hence that objection amounts to nothing.

3. It is also objected that the theory I have advocated obviates the necessity for the resurrection of the body. I accept the resurrection of the body as a fact, because Paul so teaches. The philosophy of it I do not concern myself about. Paul says that when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:6); and that there we are "clothed upon with our house, or body, which is from heaven" (verse 2). This has to be accepted as well as the other. God's purpose is to give us back our old bodies glorified, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Elder Brother (Philippians 3:21). His purpose in this He has not revealed. Our theory contains nothing conflicting with it. Hence as an objection it is *nil*. This objection assumes that one can not go to heaven without this earthly body glorified; or that if he could, then he would have no further use for the body. But this is to assume that of which we know nothing. When Paul was caught up to heaven

he did not know whether he was in the body or out (II Corinthians 12:2-3). He may have been in. He may have been out. Then to be there out of the body is a possibility, and yet every thing be so life-like, and one is so like himself, that he does not know he is out of the body. It follows, therefore, that being in heaven does not depend on our having our glorified bodies.

... This is the picture which John saw as the consummation of all things: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell

with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:1-3).

At death the saints go to heaven to be with God. After the new earth is ready, God comes down to it to dwell with the saints. That life eternal in the new earth will be just as real as this. God hasten the day when it may be ours. When only the saints shall dwell upon it, and sin and pain and death shall be no more. When this frail, suffering, worn-out body will be purified and glorified and made like unto the glorified body of the dear Redeemer. Glorious finality! The soul grows wild with the thought. Heaven help us to be patient while we wait.

The Resurrection Of Our Lord



Winfred Clark

I had the good fortune to speak at the East Tennessee School of Preaching Lectures on Monday night, March 6. The topic assigned was "The Resurrection." This was a part of the theme "The Case For Christianity." Here is a brief outline on the material used.

When we speak of the resurrection it must be understood that such points to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:22). It also means we are talking of the bodily resurrection (John 1:19, 21). There are a number of passages which address this very thing.

I. There Are And Have Been Enemies Of The Resurrection Of Our Lord.

Did not some people attempt to prevent his resurrection? You have only to read Matthew 27:62-66. There were the religious leaders who wanted to be sure that his body stayed in the tomb.

There were others who would seek to pervert the fact of the resurrection even after it occurred. You will find those same leaders giving large sums of money to the soldiers to say, "the disciples came and stole the body away" (Matthew 28:11-15). So that which they could not prevent they would now seek to pervert.

There were others who denied it (Matthew 22:23). Some who mocked (Acts 17:32). Some said it was not so (I Corinthians 15:12). So we can see the resurrection had and still has its enemies.

II. The Resurrection Is Essential

One must accept the fact that the resurrection is tied to a number of things that stand or fall with this fact.

For one thing, the claim of the Saviour is tied to this fact. You will find again and again where Jesus claimed that he would be raised from the dead (John 2:19; Matthew 12:40; 16:21).

One could also say the credibility of the scripture is tied to the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:4). Paul said it was according to the scriptures.

We must admit the comfort of the saint is tied to such (I Thessalonians 4:13-14).

III. The Resurrection Is However An Established Fact.

The evidence is overwhelming in support of this great truth. It has reliable support that cannot be gainsaid.

Take a look at the tomb of Jesus. We know the body was laid in the tomb (Matthew 27:57-66). We know the tomb was later empty (Matthew 28:1-10). Even the soldiers said it was empty. The religious leaders accepted the fact that it was empty. The disciples knew it was empty. So that empty tomb has to be accounted for.

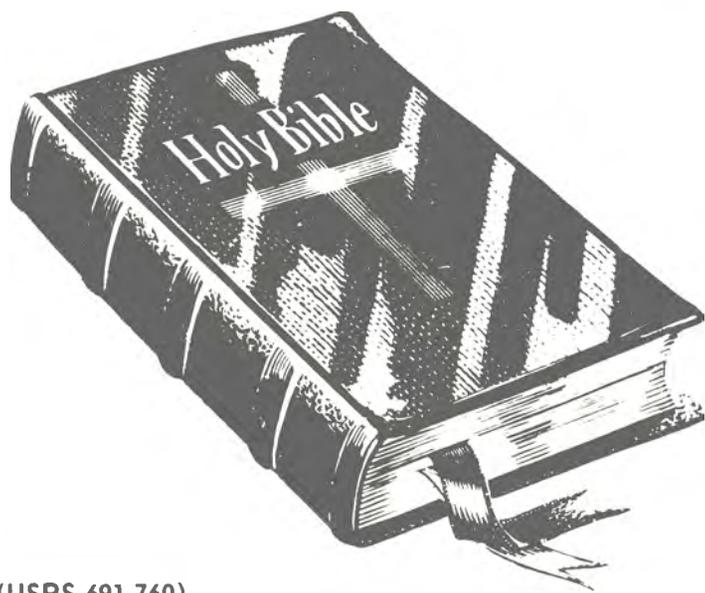
Listen to the testimony of witnesses. Among other things, you have 13 sermons recorded in Acts and the majority deal with the resurrection. There is ample proof that those who preached this fact had God's endorsement (Acts 4:1-33).

One has to take into account the transformation of men like Peter, Paul, and others. There is no way one could account for Paul's life and labors without the resurrection.

There can be no doubt about Christianity being true. The resurrection of our Lord cries from the housetops, "HE IS RISEN." For that we can say, Thank God!

--W. Hobbs St. Church, Athens, AL.

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 14

The Family Of God

Yarbrough Leigh

In most English translations of the scriptures, the word "family" as applied to God's people, is found only in Ephesians 3:15 where Paul wrote: "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The Greek term translated "family" denotes those of a common paternal lineage, both living and dead: those whose descent is from a common father. This same Greek term is found in two other New Testament passages: in Luke 2:4 where Joseph is spoken of as being "of the house and "lineage" of David;" and in Acts 3:25 where Peter made reference to the promise to Abraham that "in thy seed shall all 'kindreds' of the earth be blessed."

What, Then, Is The "Family" Of God?

From this brief examination we observe that it is made up of all those who have been born of God through the Spirit; having heard his word, believed him, repented and turned to him with such other evidence of obedient faith as to give them acceptance as his children. This family is made up of all those thus called by his name, both in heaven and in earth (Ephesians 3:15).

The apostle Paul made reference to this "family," or "lineage," or "kindred" of God in Ephesians 1:10, where he wrote: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." In the close of that chapter, he wrote of that one group into which all the family of God has been gathered together, as follows: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). This "family," or "lineage," or "kindred," or "people" of God is all of those who have been included in the blood-bought church of our precious Lord: all those for whom atonement was made in his blood on the cross.

The Grandeur And Glory Of Being A Child Of God

The beloved apostle John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him

not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1-2).

Again, the peerless apostle Paul wrote: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself 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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed unto us" (Romans 8:14-18).

Think of it: "children of God, and joint-heirs with his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen redeemer!"

All Are "Sons," Regardless Of Person Or Gender

Although God has made distinction between male and female gender in roles of leadership and authority in the church, there is no "sex discrimination" with God as concerns the status of either in the Eternal City of God. All are "children of God," with all the rights of inheritance, regardless of gender. In the Galatian letter we read, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). Next we read, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28-29).

Why "Sons," And Not Just "Children?"

Probably, to accommodate the message to traditional rights of inheritance in the eastern nations; in which the principal heir and head of the clan would be the eldest son. So, in the Roman letter, Paul wrote, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" and in the Galatian letter, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an

heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 4:6-7).

Even Jesus is referred to as a "firstborn," thus emphasizing his legal right of inheritance. We read that he was "the firstborn of every creature," (Colossians 1:15); and again, "the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18).

Paradoxically, all the members of God's ageless and limitless family are referred to as being "firstborn!" In Hebrews 12:23, (Ye are come) "to the general assembly and church of the firstborn," (literally, "a church of firstborn ones;" i.e.: a church made up of all first-born sons! Therefore, without distinction or discrimination between them, all God's adopted children enjoy the right of co-inheritors with God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our blessed Lord; -- and he is made to be heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2)!

The Grandeur And The Glory Of This Inheritance

The bold and impetuous apostle Peter wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:3-5).

What Glory God Has Reserved For His Adopted Children!

Some years ago, Christine and I were standing with a fine couple as they were finalizing the adoption proceedings for a beautiful baby girl. The judge asked of the adoptive father a question that stirred deep emotions in him: "Do you wish this child to have the right of inheritance?" With tears, he answered: "All that I shall ever have, I wish to share with this darling daughter!"

Heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast said of us thy children, "Every blessing I have is theirs in my Son, and they shall be heirs of all things with him!" (Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:17; Hebrews 1:2). Amen.

--P.O. Box 26156 Birmingham, AL 35226.



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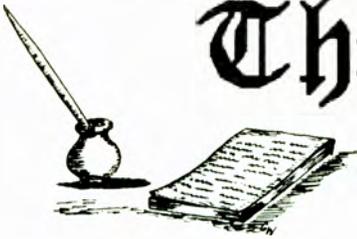
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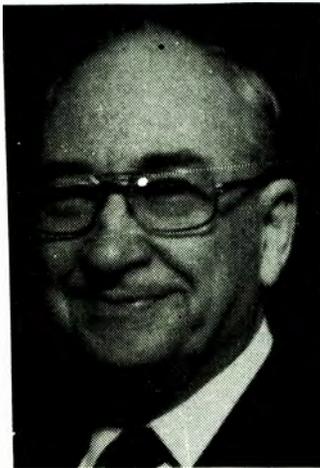
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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

How To Be Converted



Flavil H. Nichols
 follow.

Do you remember when you studied Arithmetic? The textbook gave some instructions, then presented some examples of how to apply the rules stated. Similarly, Christ gave the Great Commission to his disciples. Then, in the book of Acts several cases of conversion are recorded as "examples" for us to

Commission that faith, repentance, and baptism are conditions of salvation. This is not to overlook the divine provisions which make our forgiveness possible. Wholly by grace on God's part (Ephesians 2:8-10), he gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16) to redeem us from our sins. Christ gave his life, his very blood, for our salvation (Romans 5:6-10). And the Holy Spirit both revealed and confirmed the gospel plan of salvation (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:1-4).

On an annual Jewish feast day (Pentecost), in the city of Jerusalem, the apostles received "power from on high" just as Jesus had promised (Luke 24:49). Then, in the designated city, they "began" to preach "repentance and remission of sins IN HIS NAME" as Jesus had directed (Luke 24:47).

That very day the apostles proclaimed the resurrection and ascension of Christ. To prove that he ascended, they cited the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was witnessed by "tongues like as of fire" sitting on each apostle, and gave them power to speak in languages they never had studied, but which the audience understood. The sermon convinced them that the man named Jesus (whom they had crucified less than two months previously) is alive again, and is now at God's right hand, ruling on David's throne. He is now both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:22-36).

Being pricked in their heart by the terrible sin they had committed, they inquired: "Men, and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (verse 41).

Review how they were saved: They were taught the gospel facts (I Corinthians 15:1-4), including the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:22-36). By this gospel they became believers in Christ. Now having faith in Christ, they were taught to repent and be baptized in his name for the remission of sins (verse 38). Three thousand became Christians that very day (verse 41). This is an approved example of conversion. It is a 'sample' which shows how Jesus' rules of salvation work.

Now, please compare YOUR conversion with theirs. Remember that theirs twice passed under the inspection of the Holy Spirit: (1) when it occurred, for the apostles that day were baptized in the Holy Spirit, and were present; and (2) when it was recorded, for the Holy Spirit guided Luke to write the book of Acts. (If it had not been done right, would inspiration not have corrected it?) So, we can rest assured that they were converted correctly. Now, if your conversion differs from theirs, should you not follow their example -- and do it right???

(Next week: another example).

"Here Am I"



Dean Fugett

How long has it been since you found yourself deeply involved in some activity of the Lord's work for which you had volunteered? We are not speaking of some one-time effort, but a continuing long-term task for which you volunteered to take the responsibility. The Lord's army is a volunteer force. There can be no other kind in

his service. No one is pressed into service for the King of Kings. Any time the church has turned to something else, we have developed a system of hirelings. Everyone knows how dependable a hireling is. "But he that is an hireling . . . seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep" (John 10:12-13). This statement is not to negate the Biblical teaching that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." The distinction sometimes gets blurred; but the discriminating spiritual mind can tell the difference. Now, back to our discussion of the faithful, willing servant.

If Paul were to come into your community seeking a Timothy such as he found at Lystra, would he choose you, based upon your record of spirituality and faithfulness? Would he choose you to travel as his companion and fellow-labourer in the great task of spreading the gospel of Christ? Would your spiritual record recommend you to that calling? Could Paul count on you as he could on Timothy? "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you . . . For I have no man likeminded, who will truly care for your state . . .

To his disciples Jesus, after his resurrection, gave this commission: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Another record of it says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Luke tells us that Jesus "said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:46-49).

John records the resurrection, and says: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:19-23).

Putting these four records together we learn that the gospel must be preached, or that sinners must be taught. All who would be saved must "believe," for "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "Repentance" is necessary to obtain the "remission of sins" (Luke 24:47). And after believing and before being saved Jesus put baptism: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Stated concisely, we learn from the Great

Continued On Page 3

Things Which Keep People From Believing

Clifford Dixon

Even though the gospel is preached to many people over and over again, some still will not accept it. The reason is that many do not believe. There are certain things that keep people from believing the truth which would make them "free" (John 8:32).

1. Some do not believe because they have not the word of God abiding in them. Jesus said, "And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not" (John 5:38). God's word does not abide in people because they let other things take its place in their lives. Everything else has the priority. The television gets hours of attention every day, while God's book gathers dust upon the shelf. The Bible is "the lamp to our feet, and the light of our path" (Psalms 119:105). We need a revival of interest back to that which enlightens our path.

2. Some do not believe because they search the scriptures with the wrong purpose in mind. The unbelieving Jews thought eternal life was in the Old Testament (John 5:39). How sadly mistaken they were! The Old Testament testifies of a coming Christ, as Saviour, but they were rejecting him. Many of our day search the scriptures to prove a pre-adopted creed. By "scrapping" verses of the scriptures we could prove (?) any doctrine. We must take the scriptures within their context if we arrive at the proper understanding of them.

3. Some do not believe because they refuse to come to Christ. Christ said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). As in that day, so in ours: instead of going to Christ, many people expect Christ to come to them in some miraculous way. Christ has given a tender

invitation for all to come to him (Matthew 11:28-30). He has given plain instructions in his gospel that men need to believe on him, repent of their sins, confess him, and be baptized to be saved (John 8:23; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:16). Yet, so many go to an altar and ask the Lord to come to them and save them, or wait for some still small voice. This is what they have been taught (by the preachers and philosophers of the day) to expect. All the pleadings of the Lord through the simple gospel fall on deaf ears. Remember the gospel is the power of God to save men (Romans 1:16). Faith is produced by hearing the word, and not by praying (Romans 10:17).

4. Some do not believe because they have not the love of God in them (John 5:42). Love of the world has taken the place of the love of God (I John 2:15-16). Things of this world only leave us empty and unprepared to meet God. God has provided all blessings we enjoy (James 1:17), which ought to compel us to be thankful to him and to love him for his gifts. The law taught, "Thou shalt love the Lord God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37). All men ought to love God because he loves us, and commends his love to us by sending Christ to die that we might be saved (Romans 5:8). If we could only get people to see from whence their blessings flow, they would be in a better position to believe.

5. Men do not believe because they give too much honor to men, and not enough honor to God. Jesus told the unbelievers of his day, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). People wanting honor from one

another excel in their sports, work, or other activities to please their fellow men. If we want honor from God, we should excel in serving him and in obeying him. Worship, study, and personal evangelism would be pleasures, because we would be seeking to please God. Many of Jesus' day believed he was the Christ, but refused to confess him, lest they be put out of the synagogue. "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). Here is the reason people are so prone to jump on the band/wagon of the most popular fad, rather than to accept the simple truth of the gospel. The gospel does not have the glamour, and does not receive the popular applause. One obeying the New Testament gospel, and living the Christian life, will be talked about and ridiculed. This does not appeal to people seeking the honor of men.

Who is the true believer? The good soil who "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). Faith is produced in the one who hears the word (Romans 10:17). Obedience to the terms of salvation is what is meant by "keeping the word" (I Peter 1:22-23). Fruit that is produced is both righteousness, good being done to others, and souls being won to the Lord (John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:22, 23; Galatians 6:9, 10; James 1:27).

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Why Do People Fall Back?



Jerri Manasco

It is a sad reality of life that many who begin the joy of the Christian life fail to complete the journey. That it is possible for a child of God to drift away from the truth and then to be finally lost, is a scriptural fact. One can allow the word of God to slip from his grasp (Hebrews 2:1-4). He can be moved away

from the hope of the gospel (Colossians 1:21-23). He can depart from the living God through unbelief (Hebrews 3:12-13). Multiplied scriptures could be cited to confirm this teaching; but these are sufficient for the thinking person to realize the truth of the matter.

The tragedy is compounded when one who falls accepts the Bible teaching that one who falls back is truly in a dangerous position. Peter defines such an one as being (in his last state) worse than the first (II Peter 2:20-21). The Hebrews writer draws a distinction between those whose faith impels them forward, and those who somewhere along the way fall back. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man DRAW BACK, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:38-39). If a Bible

"Here Am I"

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But ye know the proof of him that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 2:20-22). "... My beloved and faithful . . ." (I Corinthians 4:17). Could there be prophecies of your usefulness to the Cause? What does your present record say?

If the situation called for another Esther willing to risk all for the Lord's people, would the Lord call on you? Or, would he have to look elsewhere for deliverance? Remember, it could have meant death for Esther: "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come into the king in the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days" (Esther 4:11). "... And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to law: and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16). Would your past and present record recommend you as a prospective Esther if the Lord had need?

If Satan were to appear again before the Lord, "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7), would the Lord feel confident in drawing attention to you and your faithfulness as he did Job's? Are you a "fair-weather" Christian, faithful only when it is

convenient and when everything is going well? Or, can the Lord firmly point out "... my faithful servant, (your name) _____, . . . that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8)? Again, what does your record say?

If God were looking for a modern-day Moses, would it take more imploring by the Lord to get you to take the leadership of his people than it did for Moses? We have witnessed some being entreated to become elders, deacons, or preachers, who had all ability necessary to do a great work, but who did not have the commitment, conviction, or willingness. Could it be said of you that (He) "was faithful in all his house, as a servant . . ." (Hebrews 3:5)?

The Lord continues to need servants --volunteers. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Are the labourers few because YOU failed to volunteer? Will you answer, "Here am I. Send me!"?

Will the Lord have to apologize for your having been one of his? How can you answer -- based upon the past? Now, what will you do with your future? "Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow . . ." (James 4:13). "If any man will come after me. . ." (Matthew 16:24).

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Why Do People Fall Back?

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writer says that some draw back unto perdition, then we accept that as truth! If the Bible states that God has no pleasure in one who thus draws back, then we take that at face value. Even if it be any one of us -- preacher, elder, deacon, any member, young or old -- the rule is still the same; God will respect no man's person. Any who draw back will find the result the same. There are no extenuating circumstances! It is for this reason that the Christian must be diligent in making sure his calling and election (II Peter 1:5-11).

Some of the Christians of the first century had already drawn back by the time of the completion of the written New Testament. Some had turned aside after false teachings (II Timothy 2:15-19). Others had turned away after the world for one reason or another (II Timothy 4:10). Paul said that some had "turned aside after Satan" (I Timothy 5:11-15). Others were undoubtedly heading in that direction as can be deduced from the New Testament epistles (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:3-6; 6:1; I Corinthians 5; etc.). If these things were taking place in the first century, under the direct leadership of the apostles, then how could we expect less today?

That apostasies were occurring, is beyond dispute. The question we need to address is this: WHY were people falling? Why do people today fall back after having begun their Christian life? A fair examination of this should assist us in (1) tending to our own personal spiritual development, and (2) reclaiming some who have departed.

Some go back because they have not been properly grounded in the faith. Their heart has not been totally converted to Christ. Two reasons may account for this. First, some simply failed to grasp the meaning of becoming and being a Christian. Second, some simply were not taught sufficiently to become solid Christians. This second cause, though it has been emphasized time and again, needs to be emphasized again and again! Far too many times a preacher is so concerned about "job security" which depends (?) on the number of "additions," so he goes out over the neighborhood to find as many as he can to baptize. The result is obvious: he has done inadequate teaching! Those whom he has baptized have outwardly "become members of the church" without having the slightest idea of what that means in practical terms. Tragedy is the ultimate consequence. This is the picture of those whirlwind conversions that have characterized so many in the past and present.

Jesus deals with the topic of unconverted people, in the parable of the Sower: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:13-14). These simply have not become serious students of the Master! The Colossian letter adds to this the teaching that one must continue in the faith and be grounded and settled therein (Colossians 1:23). Furthermore it is required that one be "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith . . ." (Colossians 2:6-8). Where there is carelessness, there probably will be apostasy!

A failure to go by the Book accounts for many

departures. "Hold fast the form of sound words . . ." (II Timothy 1:13). Yes, there is a "form" that must be kept -- even though liberal and modernistic brethren contend that there are no "rules" for us to go by. Our liberal brethren should not be surprised if there should be a mass exodus from their congregations as a result of their teaching that the New Testament "binds" nothing legal on Christians! The denominational leaders have in recent years become upset over declining church affiliations; but what can you expect when you have spent generations teaching people that the "organized" church is not essential to their eternal safety? Our own brethren need to be learning something! Just as it was in the New Testament times, even now we are confronted with the danger of being led away with the error of the wicked (II Peter 3:17). How can we expect to live in faith, when there is no respect for THE faith (Jude 3)?

Failure to encourage one another accounts for some of the departures from the Lord. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:23-24). "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). The concern of the individual for

himself, and the concern for others in the Lord, will result in more exhorting and loving encouragement. We all need this along the way, and we need it frequently. One may contend that there are many who have fallen back even though they had plenty of encouragement. Of course this is true. But is it not also true that some likely **would not have fallen back** if they had received more brotherly encouragement? Surely this is true. When the old associates are pulling for the attention of the brethren, especially those more recently converted, we must exert a more meaningful attraction for them to stay with the Lord. Jesus' words to Peter may be appropriate here: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).

If YOU were the one who is slipping back, would you not appreciate some of your brethren turning loose of some frivolous pastime just long enough to come and visit you with words of exhortation? If each of us will consider that indeed "I" might be the one who is drifting (Galatians 6:1), would it not cause us to show more concern to our brethren who ARE in fact drifting?

COULD MY VISIT BE THE KEY TO ANOTHER BROTHER'S SURVIVAL IN THE LORD? What an awesome challenge. But then, the Christian is faced with challenges daily!

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The Position And Posture Of The Christian



Winfred Clark

one is relation to the world and salvation? Over and over Paul used this phrase in the Ephesian letter. We know what it means to be "in school," or "in the army." That means we are occupied with certain responsibilities. It means we are concerned about a certain way of life. Being "in Christ" carries with it the idea that we are separated from the world, and that we are not of the world. Oh yes, one may live in some town or community in the world; but his manner of life is not like those around him. His habits and hopes differ.

Take a moment to glance at Ephesians 4-5. Again and again you will find Paul talking about "walking." He would have them "walk worthy" (Ephesians 4:1). That means live in keeping with the high calling of the gospel. They are called

I heard a man make a statement about the "posture" of the Christian. I know he was not talking about one's sitting in a chair, or standing erect.

As you read your Bible you will find passages that deal with position, and posture, as it relates to Christ. Take for example the phrase, "in Christ." Does that not tell you WHERE

upon to "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2). This as a way of setting the tone to one's life. It keeps him alert to the tremendous responsibilities shared by Christians.

As Paul comes to the last chapter of this book he talks about "standing." That means an unflinching stand. There is to be no wavering in the face of the enemy. One must put on the whole armor of God to be able to do this, according to Ephesians 6:10-18. This carries with it the idea that one might have to fight. He may have to oppose some things; but that is a part of the posture of the Christian.

One posture described in this letter, found in Ephesians 3:14, is the "bowing of the knee." This will help the Christian to maintain the posture that is his in relation to the world and all that is about him. This is the position from which he can arise to meet his responsibilities.

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—Acts 26:25

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Living Well



W. A. Holley

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew" (turn away from) "evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue" (pursue) "it" (I Peter 3:8-12).

Obviously, many in our society do not "love life;" for, each

year, countless thousands end up as suicides. Surely there is a better way for one to live life.

Living life is serious business. One author said, "One life -- a little gleam of time between two eternities -- no second chance forever more." Theodore Roosevelt said: "The poorest way to face life is with a sneer." Mary Rhinehart said: "A little work, a little sleep, a little love, and it's all over."

One should not merely exist, but live a life of usefulness, thus contributing something of value to earth's citizens. Are we making the world in which we live better, for ourselves and for others?

How can we go about making life worth living? We shall offer these suggestions--

(1) Pursue a useful and serviceable work. Adam was required to "keep and dress" the trees of the garden, even though he was in Paradise (Genesis 2:15). All should learn to work with their own hands; for, if they will not work, they should not eat (I Thessalonians 4:11; II Thessalonians 3:10). If we follow Jesus, we will not wish to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others (Matthew 20:28). Hence, we should not look upon work as drudgery, but as a means of serving others.

(2) To live well, we must have some one to love. The two greatest commands in the Holy Scripture is to love God, and to love our neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40). We suggest that Luke 10:25-37, be read that our readers may see a demonstration of the principle involved.

We, therefore, should love God, the Bible, the church, the brethren, and our families. Anything short of this objective cannot gain the approbation of God!

(3) To live well one must learn to accept himself. Limitations are bound upon us all. Not all of us can be President of the United States. We cannot all be Generals, or Admirals; but we can be all that we can be! One old man said, "I know that I'm not very much, but I am what I am." Daniel Webster refused to be nominated for the office of Vice-President on two occasions; but in each instance, had he been willing to take second place, he from that office would have become President of the United States!!

Fanny Crosby possessed a great handicap, but she did not permit it to destroy her. She said, "I am the happiest person! If I had not been deprived of my sight, I would not have had a good education and a good memory." We all do not have the same talents and the same opportunities (Matthew 25:14-30). Some one has said, "Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility." Do not grumble about your lot in life. Take what you have -- and make the best of it (Judges 7:21). We urge our readers to do their best with what they have, where they are, and for as long as they may live.

(4) Learn well the art of self-examination. Most of us are experts at criticizing OTHERS, but we should begin with OURSELVES. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Corinthians 13:5).

Sometimes we are so concerned (or, critical) about others, we forget ourselves. Listen to Jesus Christ: "And why beholdest thou the mote" (a tiny speck) "that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam" (crosstie) "that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).

(5) To live well one must cultivate an interest in

the welfare of others. "Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Philippians 2:3-4, A.S.V.). We must learn to bear our own burdens and, also, the burdens of others (Galatians 6:1-6). One person, after reading the story of the Good Samaritan was asked what he had learn from it? His reply was, "When I get into trouble my neighbor should help me." He, therefore, thought only of himself! "Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:13-16).

(6) Learn to stick to the job till it is done. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). No preparation for future life is possible after one is dead. One can overcome failure, if one will try, try, again and again.

(7) To live well one must leave an abundance of room in one's life for spiritual activity. One who leaves God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the Lord's church, out of his life is certain to be a failure!! In Christ Jesus are "all spiritual blessings" (Ephesians 1:3). How can one partake of these blessings? The answer is simple: By faith, repent of your sins, confess the name of Jesus, and then be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; Romans 6:3-4).

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Baptism Versus Getting Wet

Don Williams

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "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" (Romans 6:4). "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are ABOVE, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, NOT on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

These and other verses show that when a person is truly baptized in conversion, a change takes place in his life. He is now spiritually clean -- all past sins have been forgiven (Acts 22:16), and he is now to serve a new master and Lord, Jesus Christ. This new relationship is to be seen in the change of his previous life-style. A song that we sometimes sing expresses it well:

"Oh the things I used to say, I don't say them anymore;

Oh the places I used to go, I don't go there anymore;

Oh the things I used to do, I don't do them anymore;

There's been a great change since I've been born again."

This new birth is to result in a changed life. Paul says that when one becomes a Christian, there must first of all be a crucifying of self. We must give up OUR desires, to follow after Jesus. He continues in Galatians 2:20 by saying "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Now all this is not to say, that we will not be bothered by previous bad habits and

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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

Humming In Worship



Flavil H. Nichols

grievously stunned by an unscriptural element in your worship.

Before the first song ("My God And I"), the song director instructed some of the various parts to HUM while others SANG the different stanzas.

His "explanations" demonstrated that he recognizes this fact: there is a difference between SINGING and HUMMING! He knows -- as do all others -- that HUMMING is NOT singing! and that SINGING is not humming!

Following the last stanza, he led all who would participate in HUMMING one entire stanza -- while no one SANG!

This was a FIRST for me! --Oh, many times I have heard choral groups HUM; but never before have I heard humming IN WORSHIP!

Aside from worship, if one wants to hum (or, even whistle!), I have no objection. But to do such IN WORSHIP is sinful! Why? For exactly the same reason a PIANO in worship is sinful! -- Simply because there is no biblical authority for it in worship!

If --apart from the worship -- I eat butter and jelly on bread in my home, at a restaurant, on a picnic, or at a love feast in the church building, nobody can lodge scriptural objection. But to serve butter and jelly on the communion bread --in worship -- would be a sin. Furthermore, it would force all worshipers to participate in the unscriptural practice, or else omit an element of worship which God did authorize (in this illustration, communion).

This is an exact parallel to adding a PIANO to the singing, or to adding HUMMING to the SINGING! Either addition compels all worshipers to participate in the unscriptural practice, or else omit what God did authorize -- SINGING!

It is true that, IN CONTRAST TO MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, the command to SING authorizes "vocal music" --NOT instrumental!

But God did not use the generic term "vocal music" --he was specific, saying: "S-I-N-G." He said, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in

your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).

Note, please, that the only accompaniment authorized for "singing" is "making melody in your heart." While with the physical vocal chords we SING, our hearts are atuned also. This text does NOT authorize any other 'vocal sounds' (not even those which resemble instruments of music) to accompany SINGING.

Again we read: ". . . teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). Relative to THIS text also (--I know this is repetitious!--): while with the physical vocal chords we SING, our hearts are atuned also --there is grace in our hearts to the Lord! This is the only "accompaniment" authorized for "singing." Nor does this text authorize any other 'vocal sounds' (such as resemble instruments of music) to accompany SINGING. There is absolutely NO New Testament authority for humming (nor any other vocal sounds) to accompany SINGING.

In singing, God specifies that we are "teaching and admonishing" one another. No one present last night was TAUGHT one single truth by the humming! Nor by that humming was any one ADMONISHED to do one solitary duty, or not to do a single thing that is wrong.

Like butter and jelly on the communion bread, or like whistling, any time we worship HUMMING is simply without one shred of New Testament authority. It is as unscriptural as a PIANO!

I have preached from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from Canada to the Gulf: yet this is the first time in my 55 years of preaching I have ever been present where any "church of Christ" ever hummed in worship. Nor have I heard of it before in worship.

Your song director's request for the audience to HUM caught me totally by surprise! I resisted a sudden impulse to interrupt him, asking for scriptural authority for HUMMING, or else request him to omit it. Perhaps I erred in NOT doing so publicly.

At Jerusalem, when Ananias sinned publicly, Peter rebuked him publicly (Acts 5:1-6). About three hours later Peter also rebuked Ananias' wife, Sapphira, publicly -- when she also sinned publicly (Acts 5:7-11).

At Antioch, Paul withstood Peter "to the face" for acting a hypocrite, by which "dissimulation" (New King James: "hypocrisy") even Barnabas was carried away. Since the sin was public, Paul wrote: "I said unto Peter before them all . . ." (Galatians 2:11-14).

'Everybody in town' was talking about a case of fornication at Corinth (I Corinthians 5:1-13). Paul did not write the elders to PRIVATELY admonish the guilty man. Rather, it was to be dealt with publicly: "When ye are gathered together . . . , deliver

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Humming In Worship

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such an one unto Satan" (verses 3-5). This case of fornication was publicly known; and the correction was to be public.

"Them that sin rebuke **before all**, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). This in no way contradicts Matthew 18:15-18, for there Jesus is telling how to deal with **personal** offenses: "If thy brother" --one individual-- "shall trespass against thee" (another individual).

During the Bible class following your assembly, I wrote a note to the song director, briefly stating my objection, sending it to him by one of your members. While driving home (more than three hours away) my conscience troubled me, because I had kept silent. I meditated and prayed over this matter much of the night. I have agonized over this situation, and this letter to you.

If I sinned by keeping silent, and in not **publicly** pointing out the unscripturalness of HUMMING in worship, and in not urging you and your congregation to adhere to God's revealed will in the Bible, please forgive me. My only excuse is my surprise, or shock, at the matter, and the brevity of that worship service.

From the song leader's remarks at the beginning of the service, I greatly fear such HUMMING has

been done previously there --for he explained that he had been told his previous "directions" were not very clear, and that he would try to make them clearer this time. This implied that on at least one former occasion he has led you in this unscriptural practice.

Has your congregation previously HUMMED in worship? --This possibility frightens me, and has caused me to write much more fully than would have been necessary otherwise! Do you brethren, as elders, see that it is unscriptural?

Elders have awesome and weighty responsibilities (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17). I pray that God will bless you with "wisdom from above" (James 3:17). It would be tragic and lamentable for your great congregation to be linked with a new apostasy of the Lord's church! In addition to its being totally unauthorized in worship, I fear that HUMMING will but pave the way for the introduction and acceptance of mechanical instruments of music in worship!

Also, dear brethren, please be assured that I am aware of your complete congregational autonomy and independence. But as one who loves the church, and loves the truth, I offer these (unsolicited) recommendations:

1. I respectfully urge each of you to study carefully the matters I have presented. If you cannot by the scriptures show me to be in error, you should -- each of you -- arrive at definite personal convictions as to the scripturalness of the position set forth herein.

2. If HUMMING in worship has previously been done there, inform the congregation that you regret you did not study it through carefully the **FIRST** time, and are sorry it ever has been done.

3. Establish a policy that it is not to be practiced again, and announce it to the congregation.

4. Take the necessary steps to convert the song leader if possible --for his salvation.

I trust there will be no "next time" --anywhere. But I now am resolved that I will not again keep silent if I am present anywhere it does happen.

Yours in Christian love,
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Baptism Versus Getting Wet

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evil associations. Satan will now try harder than ever to get us back into that old life-style of sin and worldly pleasure. We as Christians must always be on our guard, and must use the power of God's word to successfully defeat the temptations that come our way. Jesus, in Matthew 4, overcame the temptations from Satan himself by saying three times, "It is written." We, too, need to use that

same power today.

After the funeral of a man who was not a Christian, the question of his church-going came up. His relatives said that he did not go to church at all. One remarked that a brother of theirs used to go. In fact, she said, "He has been baptized three different times, but none of them **TOOK!**" What about your conversion to Christ? Did it **TAKE?** Can others see

a change in your manner of life because you have been baptized into Christ? More importantly, can Christ claim you as one of his?

May we all sing and pray, "Let The Beauty Of Jesus Be Seen In ME!"

--Route 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

Is The Church Essential?

Clifford Dixon

There are many people who say that the church is not essential to salvation, but that a person can be saved out of it as well as in it. Our study will be, What does the Bible teach about this subject?

The same thing that brings salvation also brings church membership. In Mark 16:16 we read: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In Acts 2:47 we read, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." When one is saved he is at that instant added to the church. If one is not a member of the church, it follows that he is just not saved.

Christ purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). Did Christ purchase a non-essential institution? If so, he shed his blood in vain. I do not believe that he shed his blood in vain. Hence I believe the church is essential. Also, if one is to get any benefits from the purchase price that Christ paid, it must be by being a member of the church. If I bought a new suit of clothes, the only way that I could get any benefit from that purchase would be by wearing the suit. Since Christ purchased the church with his blood, the only way that I can get any benefit from that purchase price, is by being in the church.

It is clearly stated in Ephesians 2:16 that Christ

reconciles man to God "in one body, by the cross." The "one body" is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Therefore we are reconciled to God "in" the church. To say the church is non-essential would be to say that man does not need to be reconciled to God. But man is separated from God because of sin (Isaiah 59:2), and must be reconciled to God. Therefore since reconciliation is in the church, the church is necessary to our salvation.

The same act of baptism that is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), also puts one "into one body," which is the church (I Corinthians 12:13). One can not have remission without being made a member of the church.

In Ephesians 1:3 we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The church of God at Corinth consisted of the sanctified "in Christ Jesus" (I Corinthians 1:1-2). Since all spiritual blessings are "in Christ," then all spiritual blessings are in the CHURCH. Therefore all need to be in the church to enjoy spiritual blessings.

In Hebrews 12:23 the writer speaks of the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." It is important to have your name written in heaven because in Revelation

21:27 we read, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The ones entering heaven have their names in the book of life. Whose names are written in heaven? The answer: only those in the church, according to Hebrews 12:23. We certainly need to be in that number who have their names written in heaven.

When we speak of "the church," we do not mean one of many denominations, but we mean Christ's church as recorded in the New Testament. This is **THE CHURCH** that Christ is the saviour of, purchased with his blood, the saved are added to, whose names are written in heaven, where we are reconciled to God, and are promised all spiritual blessings.

The only way to become a member of the church is to believe on Christ, repent of sins, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15, 16). Won't you obey the gospel so the Lord will add you to his church?

--Route 3 Box 62, Brewton, Alabama 36426.

The Weak And Beggarly Elements

Basil Overton

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years" (Galatians 4:9-10).

The churches of Christ in Galatia were being troubled by teachers who were trying to bind on Christians the rite of circumcision (Galatians 6:12, 13), and the observance of certain days, months, times, and years (Galatians 4:10) which had been enjoined in the law of Moses, which had been abolished in the death of Christ (Galatians 3:23-25). Paul wrote the Galatian letter to teach those brethren that they should not go back under that law.

In the above text Paul referred to things of the law of Moses to which some Christians desired

again to be in bondage. Paul told the Galatian Christians that justifying their religious practices by the law of Moses, meant they were fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4). Those who try to justify using instruments of music in worship by the law in the Old Testament, should give this some serious thought.

What are called "weak and beggarly elements?" Weak is from Greek *asthene* which has several meanings. Some are: without strength; weak; infirm; helpless; imperfect; inefficient. The lexicon cites the above text as an example of the word as meaning inefficient.

Beggarly is from *ptocha* which means: reduced to beggary; mendicant; poor, indigent; of low condition; lowly.

The word *elements* of the text is from *stoicheia* which is defined: a row; a straight rod, or rule; an

element. The lexicon cites Galatians 4:3, 9 as two places where the word means an element, or rudimentary matter in an intellectual or religious system.

Apparently, all of this, "the weak and beggarly elements," means that the rites and rituals of the law of Moses served the purpose for which God ordained them, but that the gospel superseded them; and that compared to the gospel the weak or inefficient elements or rudimentary matters of the law of Moses were poor and no longer desirable.

It is folly in the extreme to leave Christ and his gospel for anything!

--Editor, *The World Evangelist*, P.O. Box 2279, Florence, AL 35630.

A Need For Witnesses



Dean Fugett

We have heard in recent years from some in our brotherhood about the desire to "witness for Christ." We have witnessed misuse and abuse of the scriptures by some who have attempted to justify the old denominational practice of "testifying" under a unique definition of witnessing. There are occasions when there

is, in fact, a definite need for genuine witnessing. We want to address the occasion when there IS a biblical imperative for "witnessing."

"For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, . . . And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented . . . This is the third time I am coming to you. IN THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES SHALL EVERY WORD BE ESTABLISHED" (II Corinthians 12:20-21:1). Paul informed the Corinthians that he would come to them, and that coming would be the occasion of dealing with those who had sinned and not repented. He informed them that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word would be established. No hearsay would suffice in the judgment carrying with it the severe consequences of which he spoke. How much better would be our circumstances today if we would follow this biblical principle.

Consider the elders who have been "kicked out" by gossip and slander. Without establishing the procedure confirmed by Paul when he said, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (I Timothy 5:19), elders have been removed from a Spirit-appointed work. Those who have participated in these injustices shall not go unnoticed by the righteous Father. No one can ignore the teaching of scripture without bearing the consequences of his sins.

Preachers have had their careers ruined and much potential, eternal good destroyed, because someone chose to start a tale; and someone else chose to

believe it and pass it on without the witness principle being applied. In many cases, those starting the tale had a personal grudge against the preacher because his preaching "stepped on their toes."

Other cases could be given concerning Christians who no longer are faithful because of false charges without witness, missionaries whose support was suspended or stopped because of unfounded charges or claims; and brethren who no longer can be fellowshipped because of a false charge, without substantiation by "two or three witnesses."

Thank God For Jesus!

Glenn A. Posey

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18) has been paraphrased: "Where no counsel is, the people fail." 'Shrinks' are plentiful! When something comes along that we can't handle, many turn to a 'Shrink' --a Psychiatrist, in other words. (I have never been to one). Of course, life gets hard at times.

I have a personal "Counsellor" --Jesus! Isaiah

foretold that the coming Redeemer would be called "Wonderful, Counsellor. . ." (Isaiah 9:6).

Jesus counsels through his word, the Bible. He always gives you the RIGHT answer. His prescription is in the Bible.

Thank God for Jesus! He lives in heaven (Acts 7).

--9th Street & 7th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.

"Temperance," Or Self-Control

Billy Watson

Self-discipline is such a great quality of life that we need to strive daily to improve it. This is one of the signs of maturity -- that which distinguishes the "child" from the "adult." A child with a little money usually lacks the "maturity" or "self-discipline" to save it until he gets enough to get something better and that he really wants more. A child with a bag of cookies today will eat them all and cry because he doesn't have any the rest of the week. A self-disciplined person may want all the delicious cookies now, but plans ahead and proportions them out to last the entire week.

It is this maturity or "self-discipline" that causes us to control our temper, our tongue, and our physical or verbal response to someone's doing something we do not like. Not because of outer pressure or force, but because of this inner

discipline, we give to those who have a NEED but do not really DESERVE the assistance. We do "right" for "right's" sake. We trust God and do his will even when it does not seem best to us, or convenient, or easy. We arise and make preparation for times to come, do what needs doing, and refrain from doing wrong -- even though it would "feel good" or prosper us.

Self-discipline is one of the seven "graces" mentioned by Peter (II Peter 1:5-7, called "temperance" in K.J.V.) as he informs us of spiritual growth and maturity.

Let us all commit ourselves to "growing up" spiritually and adding this great quality to our character. It takes effort, but everyone benefits from it.

--P.O. Box 3271, Jackson, TN 38303.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not ma
Words of Truth"

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 1989

NUMBER 16

Sheep Need Shepherds (No. 1)



Dean Fugett

In the scriptures the people of God are often presented under the figure of "sheep;" and their relationship to God and Christ is as sheep to a "shepherd" (John 10:1-16). The implication of this relationship is that sheep **NEED** shepherds. Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way . . ." (Isaiah 53:6). Peter

quoted Isaiah in the New Testament (I Peter 2:25).

Sheep left to themselves roam and stray. Since "everyone's business is no one's business," when no one is charged with the business or responsibility of shepherding the flock of God, no one does it; and the flock begins to scatter. In application to the church, this means that members drop by the wayside, get spiritually sick, and even die, if no one is charged with the business of their care. Thus, the Lord desires and makes provision for "shepherds" for his "flock."

Jesus is referred to as the "Chief shepherd" (I Peter 5:4). Under him are "shepherds" for his sheep. As flocks without shepherds are in danger of straying, falling prey to wolves, and contracting destructive diseases, so congregations without shepherds (bishops, elders, pastors) are in constant danger of threats to their existence.

The scriptures clearly set forth that it is the Lord's will that each congregation have its own **QUALIFIED** "shepherds." Please consider the following scriptures:

THE PHILIPPIANS: (Philippians 1:1).

THE EPHESIANS: (Acts 20:17, 28; I Timothy 1:3: 3).

THE CHURCHES OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY: (Acts 14:23).

THE CHURCHES OF CRETE: (Titus 1:5).

THE CHURCHES OF PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA: (I Peter 5:1-4).

THE CHURCHES OF THE HEBREWS: (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM: (Acts 15: 2, 4, 6, 22, 23).

In the face of these scriptures, no one can effectively argue that it is **NOT** God's will that all congregations of the Lord's people have elders, overseers. In fact, according to the Spirit, congregations without elders have something **"WANTING"** (Titus 1:5). It must be inferred that when a congregation has qualified men and yet church has no elders, that church is not pleasing to God! And, if a congregation has been in existence for any extended period of time and still does not have men qualified, these men who have failed to qualify themselves spiritually are in a dangerous spiritual condition. Any way one looks at it, every congregation **SHOULD** have elders. If it does not, **SOMETHING** (or **SOMEONE**) IS **LACKING**.

In our efforts to follow the God-given pattern for **ORGANIZATION** (as well as the plan for salvation, and the order of worship), we must be willing to **FOLLOW** that pattern and submit to God's will in organization -- not only submit, but put forth a concentrated effort to accomplish and maintain God's will in organization or government for his church. This points to three items that are necessary in any congregation for God's will to be implemented:

A CHURCH MUST BE WILLING AND DESIRING TO SUBMIT UNRESERVEDLY TO THE WILL OF GOD IN ALL MATTERS -- WORSHIP, WORK, SALVATION, ORGANIZATION, AND DOCTRINE. This willingness has always distinguished the Lord's church from denominations. Where

denominationalism has insisted on human accords and self-gratifying plans of salvation and sensual worship, the church of Christ has sought to follow the will of the Lord and the revealed pattern. But if we fall short on the desire to follow the Lord in any one area, we forfeit our right to claim to be his church. This is why we know that every Christian will want the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) as it pertains to overseers.

MEN MUST BE QUALIFIED, OR WILLING TO MAKE THE SACRIFICE AND EXPEND THE ENERGY TO BECOME QUALIFIED. And men properly motivated, must be willing to become servants of the Lord and his people, that they might be leaders and shepherds for God's sheep. The Lord has revealed his qualifications -- qualifications each with a purpose. He has not left us in the realm of "think-so." We must be careful to meet God's qualifications; yet we must be careful not to expect more than the Lord does in qualifying for shepherds. Just as we would not entrust our children to any unqualified streetwalker for care, neither does God want his children committed to the care of those who will not care for them and keep their best interests at heart. Remember, the hireling will flee when danger threatens, while the good shepherd will give his life for the sheep! (John 10). Men must be willing to give themselves to the work and for the sheep.

A CONGREGATION MUST BE WILLING TO FOLLOW GOD-GIVEN AND SPIRIT-APPROVED LEADERS. Most of the problems of recent years in the Lord's church can be traced to a mixture of (1) men who were not willing to lead or were not qualified to lead, and (2) congregations of people who were not willing to be led. Let's face it: Some people just refuse to be anything but "boss." If they can't run it, they will ruin it. If they can't lead because of some disqualification, they aren't Christian enough to follow the leadership of others who may be qualified. Instead, they cause trouble

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Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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Submission To The Will Of God (James 4:1-7)

Jim Laws

The theme of every heart should be "SUBMISSION" to the will of God. A reading of James 4:1-7 will reveal to even the casual reader that strife is the result of one's unwillingness to comply with God's divine commands. Such a passage, to the serious reader of the Bible, will reveal a deep and abiding principle of New Testament Christianity.

James states: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (verse 7). That is to say, submission to the will of God is a rule of everyday living for the Christian. He is to be so conscious of being obedient to God and his will that such a submissive attitude is to preface every decision he makes (James 4:15). Therefore, the proper way to plan, James says, is to continually recognize one's dependence on God and form our plans based on his will.

The problem with our world today is not a lack of military strength, nor the need for more economic security. Laying aside all the superficial problems that by means of the media are presented to the world, the REAL problem of the world is rebellion against its maker. Our desperate need is to cultivate the attitude expressed in James 4:1-7. The tragedy is that only man is involved in this rebellion. The physical world functions in perfect harmony with its creator's will. This can be seen in everything about our world, from the stars above to the smallest parts of animal and vegetable life here on earth. The birds in the sky still sing as sweetly as they ever did. All nature seems to be in tune with God's purpose, design, and creation. All of God's handiwork -- except man -- is submissive

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Sharing With Those In Need

Neal Milam

As Christians living in our great nation, we enjoy the greatest standard of living known to man. Most of us have more than the necessities of life, as God has blessed us with an abundance of material things. Modern technology provides us with every convenience and labor-saving device imaginable. Ours is the most advanced civilization in the long history of man. In addition to all of this, the child of God has the greatest blessing of all: God's great gift of his Son! Upon the cross he purchased our redemption from sin, and provides hope for us after this short life has ended (John 3:16).

While it is true that many of us enjoy both spiritual and material blessings, not all in our own society are so blessed. The news media reminds us of the needs that abound on every hand. As a nation we are becoming increasingly aware of the plight of the homeless, the disadvantaged, and downtrodden -- who lack for even the necessities of life.

The Christian must be willing to share both his spiritual and material blessings with those who are in need (Romans 12:15-16; John 13:34-35). As faithful stewards we must appreciate that:

1. *Every human being is precious in God's sight* (Matthew 25:34-36, 40). Our God still loves those engrossed in sin and contaminated with evil influences of this world. Our love should be no less. We despise the sin -- yet love the one caught

in its deceitful web.

2. *We are serving God when we serve our fellow man.* Jesus taught that when we help those who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, sick, in prison, etc. we are doing it unto him (Matthew 25:30-40). We are admonished to love those about us and treat them as we would like to be treated if we were in their position (Mark 12:31; Matthew 7:12). A painting of Christ on the cross hung in an art gallery in Dusseldorf, Germany, and over it these words, "This have I done for thee; What hast thou done for me?" Frances R. Havergal saw this work and penned the song, "I Gave My Life For Thee." This song asks the thought-provoking question, "What hast thou given for me?"

3. *With ownership comes responsibility.* To HAVE carries with it the obligation to SHARE. To possess brings with it the duty and privilege of helping those who do not have the necessities of life. The rich man in Luke 16 was condemned because of his failure to help the disadvantaged.

When we think of the needs of those around us, we must remember that their greatest need is the saving power of the gospel. Christ reminds us that a man's soul is worth more than the whole world (Matthew 16:26). Share Christ by inviting a friend to study privately, to visit or worship, and attend one of our Bible classes.

--3703 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, AL 35810.

Let The Preachers Preach

Glenn A Posev

A congregation without a preacher is like a home without a mother.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:14-15).

Let the preachers preach! Our preachers' preaching time is being slashed -- and slashed! A surgeon will be urged to take all the time he needs to perform his surgery. Which is more important: the man, or the house in which he lives? Preachers are dealing with the real, everlasting, precious man (Matthew 16:24-26; II Corinthians 4:16).

Strange indeed! Folk will attend a sporting event, and sit for hours -- and never grumble. But, alas! the preacher approaches the pulpit with an ultimatum: "If you go over twenty-five or thirty minutes, we have problems." Problems? "Yep!" The pew has lost its interest. It is not hungry and thirsty for righteousness (Matthew 5:6).

Let your preachers PREACH to you. Let them have time to teach you, reprove you, correct you, and instruct you in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16). Let them have time to encourage you -- edify you -- build you up -- pray with you, and for you. But most of all, tell you the old, old story of

God and his Son.

God, bless our preachers! Because they just have a "pinch" of time here and there to teach about God and his love. They are a rare breed of human beings, enjoying upholding the cross of Jesus to a lost and dying world, hoping and praying that "...the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law" (Nehemiah 8:3).

Let the preachers preach! I thank God I am a gospel preacher!

--9th St. & 7th Ave. S.E., Cullman, AL 35055.

Sheep Need Shepherds (No. 1)

Continued From Page 1

and keep a church from being scriptural in organization.

If the authority of God is missing from our actions, we cannot qualify as the church of the Lord. If the Lord won't overlook substitutes for baptism, worship, and work, he will not overlook substitutes for scriptural organization.

SHEEP STILL NEED SHEPHERDS. . .

--1820 Cedar Grove Rd. Cave City, AR 72521

Is The Church Of Christ Essential To One's Salvation?



W. A. Holley

When we speak of "the church" we speak of the church which our readers can find in their Bibles. We have no reference to modern denominationalism. Denominational churches came into existence long after God's divine revelation to man had been closed. One must turn to the encyclopedias for information about them.

We freely grant that all denominational churches are non-essential. But the New Testament "church" is not a detour off the way to heaven. Jesus Christ would not have built, loved, shed his blood for, a 'non-essential' church (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 5:23-27; Acts 20:28). If sinners can be saved apart from the apostolic church, then Jesus shed his precious blood in vain (Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:13-14, 18, 24).

Herewith we shall present some scriptural principles for your serious consideration:

(1) God Almighty has placed salvation "in Zion." "I will bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion . . ." (Isaiah 46:13). Where does the prophet say God will place salvation? "In Zion," we are told. But what is "Zion?" Well, according to Hebrews 12:22-23, "Zion" is "the church" which Jesus established. Hence, salvation is in the church of Christ (Romans 16:16).

(2) The word "church" comes from the Greek word *Ekklesia*, which means "the called out from the world." The whole world is lost (I John 5:19). To be saved, one must be called out of the world into Christ, into his body, where salvation is located.

How does God "call" sinners? It is "by the gospel" (II Thessalonians 2:13-14). All who respond to this call become a part of "the one body" (Colossians 3:15). The "one body" is the Lord's church (Colossians 1:18, 24). Hence, if one is not in the church, he is not among the called, and is not saved.

(3) The "church" of Christ is the "body" of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus is the Saviour of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Only the "church" of Christ is subject to him (Ephesians 5:24). Sinners are "reconciled" or saved, in one body -- the church (Ephesians 2:13-20). Thus, if one is not in the "church" which is Christ's "body," one has no connection or union with Christ who is the "head" of the body (Colossians 1:18). Again: if one is not in the "body" of Christ, the "church" of Christ, one is not under the direction or rule of

Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus is not the "head" of a body that is not his!

(4) The church is the "house" of God (I Timothy 3:15). According to the Bible one's "house" is one's "family" (Joshua 24:15; Hebrews 11:7). The Lord's "house" is a "spiritual house" (I Peter 2:5). One's "house" or "family" includes all the children born into it (John 3:3, 5; I Peter 1:22-23). God has no children outside his family. We must conclude therefore that if a person is not in the household of God, the church, he remains not a child of God, but an alien, a foreigner, and unsaved (Ephesians 2:19).

(5) Christ is the foundation of the church (I Corinthians 3:11). The "church" was not built upon Peter, but upon the bed-rock truth that Peter confessed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). It is impossible to build on Christ and not be a part of the superstructure -- the "church" of Christ. The church covers the entire rock. One cannot build on Christ, the foundation, on the outside of the "church." To build on some other foundation is to build on the sand (Matthew 7:24-27).

(6) The "church" is the "kingdom" of God on earth (Matthew 16:18-19). The Lord's kingdom includes all who are not under the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13-14). The "kingdom" of God includes all who have been cleansed by Jesus' blood, all who have been "born again . . . born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3,5; Acts 2:36-38). Hence, if one is not a citizen of God's "kingdom" -- the "church" -- he remains still in the devil's kingdom (John 8:44).

(7) The "church" is the sheep-fold of God. "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). But the "fold" or flock is the "church" (Acts 20:28). "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. . . ." (John 10:9). Thus, if one is not in the "fold" or the "church," one is not saved. Indeed, the church of Christ is essential.

(8) The Lord adds to his "church" such as should be saved: ". . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). They were saved in being added, and added in being saved. (There is no joining the church of one's choice here). Not one soul was saved out of the "church."

(9) The "church" is the "bride" of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-27). Romans 7:4 teaches that Christians are "married" to Christ. We quote, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even unto him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." If one is not in the "church," one has no relationship with Christ. Only the "bride," the "church," can inherit the marvelous blessings of Jesus Christ, the Groom (I Peter 1:4; Galatians 3:26-29). One day the Groom will be coming back after his "bride" (Ephesians 5:25-27, 32), and no

others!!

How does one become a member of the New Testament church? Believe the word of God, repent of all sins, confess Jesus' name before men, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (John 3:16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 6:3-4). The Lord adds all the saved to his church (Acts 2:47).

These words are written for those who sincerely seek for truth.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Submission To The Will Of God (James 4:1-7)

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to his will.

The Bible teaches that man is a created being (Genesis 2:7-8). He has been created from the dust of the ground. He has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). God created man a material being, but at the same time, he was created in the image of God. This expression, "in the image of God," specifically shows that man, and man alone, has been created in this fashion. To say that man was created in God's image is to say that man has a soul (Matthew 10:28). Man has dominion over all the earth (Genesis 1:26). Man can deliberate, think, plan, and execute his plans. Man can be holy. Through love of, and obedience to, Christ, he can be cleansed from his sins (Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 1:7). The fact that man has these characteristics prove that man is not just a mere

animal. Man has this relationship with God, whereas no plant nor animal does. Man is the greatest of all of God's creative handiwork. Man, who has been created in the image of God and has been given a soul that will live forever (Psalms 22:26), has rebelled against his God (Genesis 3:6; Romans 3:23). That makes the subject of submission all the more important to understand and to apply to our everyday lives.

--1511 Getwell, Memphis, TN 38111.

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Do People Receive The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Today?

Clifford Dixon

A recent radio speaker said that if one is not baptized with the Holy Spirit he is not a Christian. Another said that the reason churches are not the same as they used to be, is that a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, such as happened on Pentecost, is not happening to them today. One reasoned that the "all flesh" of Joel's prophecy literally meant that all animals as well as men would receive the Holy Spirit. His proof was the animals of Noah's ark. It is very popular to believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit for all Christians today; but what do the scriptures say on this subject?

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was never promised to everyone. It is true that John said that Christ was to baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, 12; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33); but Christ limited that promise to his twelve apostles (Acts 1:1-5). Christ told them that they would receive the "promise of the Father" in Jerusalem, and identified that promise as the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit as spoken of by John. If one reads carefully Acts 1:26 through Acts 2:47, he will see that only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The ones speaking in tongues were "Galileans" (Acts 2:7), which identified them as the twelve (Acts 1:9-11). Peter stood up "with the eleven" (Acts 2:14). When he had preached his sermon the convicted crowd asked Peter and the other "apostles" what to do to be saved (Acts 2:37). According to verse 43 only the "apostles" were performing signs and wonders.

The only other "like" outpouring of the Holy Spirit happened to Cornelius' house (Acts 10:44-48), and the reason for this is expressly given in the scriptures: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). So the baptism of the Holy Spirit proved there that the Gentiles have a right to the gospel.

The only two outpourings of the Holy Spirit recorded in the scriptures are these. Coming upon the apostles, the Holy Spirit gave them power to preach the gospel without mistake, and to confirm it with signs following. Its coming upon Cornelius and his household proved that they had a right to the gospel. It might be a surprise to some that these are the only two recorded cases of the Holy Spirit baptism in the scriptures! Many years after this Paul wrote that "there is . . . one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). This is the water baptism of the great commission (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:35-38; 10:48). You will note that even though Cornelius received the Holy Spirit baptism, he still had to submit to water baptism, which is to last through the gospel age (Matthew 28:19-20). Since there is one baptism, and that is water baptism, then there is no Holy Spirit baptism in our day.

2. There is no need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit today. The apostles received it because they needed to be guided into all truth, and needed to teach and confirm that truth to the world (John 16:13-14; 14:26; 15:26). They have been guided into all truth; and they not only spoke it, but they

also wrote it, and confirmed it for all time to come, in the New Testament. That truth is a sufficient guide for us today (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3; Jude 3).

If any other gospel is preached in our day, a curse from heaven rests upon the one who preaches it (Galatians 1:8). If people accept another doctrine other than that preached by the apostles, they have not God (II John 9). The closing chapter of the New Testament contains a condemnation to any one who would add to or take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19). Since we have the truth which the Holy Spirit revealed, we do not need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to reveal it. The apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit not only to reveal the truth but to confirm it with the signs following, which we have mentioned above (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3-4). A thing once confirmed is confirmed forever. We do not need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to confirm the truth again.

3. There is no command for a person to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. It was a promise, and not a command; and Jesus promised it to a limited number of people.

4. There is no proof that people are being baptized with the Holy Spirit today. They claim to "speak in tongues," but they are not intelligent languages like the apostles spoke (Acts 2:6). Paul showed "the signs of an apostle" (II Corinthians 12:12). He was bitten by a deadly snake, and was

not hurt (Acts 28:3-6). He raised Eutychus from death (Acts 20:9, 10). There are no such proofs given today by the people who claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

5. Those who claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit teach doctrinal error. The Holy Spirit would not tell Christians to sing (Colossians 3:16), then sanction instrumental music in religious sects today. The Holy Spirit would not reveal the great commission of Christ who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), then tell a modern preacher to tell sinners to "pray through." The Holy Spirit would not tell us there is salvation in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12), then sanction the man-made names that the various denominations wear. The Holy Spirit would not tell women of the first century to be silent in the church (I Corinthians 14:34-35), then tell the 20th century women to preach. When people teach doctrines contrary to the scriptures, it is proof that they do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Do not be deceived by the modern claims of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; but accept the cases the Bible reveals. Realize why the Holy Spirit came in baptismal measure upon some, and follow the directions of the Holy Spirit as found in the New Testament.

--Route 3, Box 62, Brewton, Alabama 36426.

An Unnecessary Exercise

Dan Winkler

A man was hoeing his garden in a chair. Said the passerby to himself, "What laziness!" However, closer observation revealed to the passerby's eye a pair of crutches leaning against the gardener's chair. The passerby was guilty of that unnecessary exercise called "jumping to conclusions."

Be Honest! Very little effort is required for attaching the worst connotation possible to the decisions or actions of others. Yes, it is so easy to jump to conclusions, ignoring (or being void of) all the facts behind the decisions and actions of others. On the other hand, it is more difficult to believe in, and hope for, the best from one another -- as Christians who love one another should (I Corinthians 13:8).

So what will help us be more fair in the concepts we have of one another, and in the conclusions we draw about one another? From the words of Jesus in that familiar passage (Matthew 7:1-5) there are several things we need to remember.

1. First, it is wrong to impetuously judge and jump to conclusions about one another. Jesus said, "Judge not" (Matthew 7:1).

2. Second, life is a mirror: we receive from it what we put into it. Jesus warned, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew 7:2). Yes, if we jump to

conclusions about others, others will jump to conclusions about us!

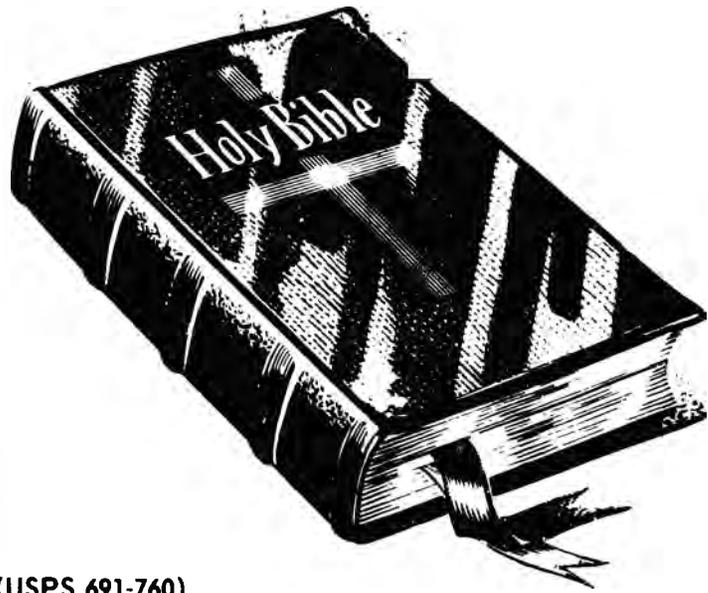
3. Third, jumping to conclusions will adversely affect our relationship with fellow-brethren. Such is inevitable. We must not capitalize on the faults of brethren, "the mote that is in thy brother's eye," and fail to consider our own faults, "the beam that is in thine own eye" (Matthew 7:3).

4. Fourth, jumping to conclusions will adversely affect our concept of self. Such transpires when our actions say to another, "Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye," but at the same time a "beam" is in our own eye (Matthew 7:4).

5. Fifth, jumping to conclusions will adversely affect our relationship with God. Yea, jumping to conclusions makes one a "hypocrite" (Matthew 7:5).

We need not be blind to the faults of others; but let us at least be fair to one another in reference to these faults. Remember, "The crosses people bear are seldom in plain sight!" "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgement" (John 7:24). Wouldn't that be great?

--Beltline Church, Decatur, AL.



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Words Of

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 1989

NUMBER 17

What Is Baptism?



W. A. Holley

The subject of baptism is an important one. Much is said in the Bible about this controversial subject. We sincerely urge our readers to lay aside all prejudice and preconceived notions on the subject of baptism. Permit the Bible to speak for itself (Isaiah 8:20; Acts 17:11). Actually, this is the only way to settle the question posed. Human judgments and

human creeds can only "muddy the waters."

WHAT IS THE ACTION OF BAPTISM?

In the New Testament, the Greek word, *baptizo*, occurs in its verb form 80 times. In its noun form, *baptisma*, it is found 22 times. These words always mean immersion -- never, NEVER, sprinkling or pouring.

In Leviticus 14:15-16 we read: "And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour" (*cheo*, to cause to flow in a continuous stream), "it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall dip" (*immerse*, submerge, bury) "his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle" (*raino*, to cause to scatter in drops) "of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord." Here God demonstrated the difference between the three words: pour, dip, and sprinkle.

Although many intelligent people try to promote the theory that there are three scriptural 'modes' of baptism (pouring, sprinkling, and immersion), there is no Biblical support for such a contention.

Your Bible, dear reader, expressly teaches that baptism is a burial. "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" (Romans 6:3-4). Thus, dear reader, if language

means anything, baptism is a burial.

Colossians 2:12 reads as follows: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Here again, baptism is said to be a burial, an immersion, -- not sprinkling nor pouring by any stretch of the imagination!!

The Bible says nothing about sprinkling or pouring as being baptism. The truth is: sprinkling and pouring are sprinkling and pouring, and nothing else!! John Wesley, commenting on Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12, wrote, "Buried with him" -- alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."

The word *baptizo* was never TRANSLATED. The Greek word *baptizo* (with its related forms) was *anglicized*, which means that it was given an English ending. In the King James Bible in 1611, it was thus *anglicized*, not translated. Why was this done? Because the translators did not want to condemn the practice of the Church of England -- sprinkling or pouring -- by putting the correct word -- immersion -- into the text, where it really belongs.

How would the Bible read, if the words *baptizo*, *baptisma*, and *baptistes* were truly translated? We shall give our readers a few examples.

"In those days came John the Immerser preaching . . ." (Matthew 3:1). "John did immerse in the wilderness . . ." (Mark 1:4). "And John also was immersing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were immersed" (John 3:23).

We shall cite a few other passages: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Another plain passage, "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38).

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be immersed, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). "For ye are all the

children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been immersed into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

WHAT BAPTISM REQUIRES

Bible baptism requires "much water" (John 3:23), coming to the water, going down into the water, and coming up out of the water (Acts 8:36-39), Baptism requires a burial, a planting in water, and a resurrection (Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12). None of these conditions can be met by sprinkling or pouring!! Hence, neither sprinkling nor pouring can be Bible baptism!!

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY?

Is baptism essential to a sinner's salvation? Indeed, it is! We have but to look seriously at Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; or I Peter 3:20-21 to see that God has commanded sinners to believe, repent of their sins, to confess Jesus' name before men, and to be baptized "for the remission of sins" in the name of Jesus Christ. These are demands of the Lord; they are not the demands of the writer of this article.

Acts of the Apostles is a book of conversions. There are ten cases of conversions recorded here. In each case of conversion in this book, the preacher is always present, the gospel is always preached, and those converted to Christ were always baptized. No one was ever baptized because he 'was already saved;' but, the truth is, the sinner was baptized "for," "in order to, (unto, EIS, Greek preposition) have his sins remitted" (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21).

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
--Acts 26:25

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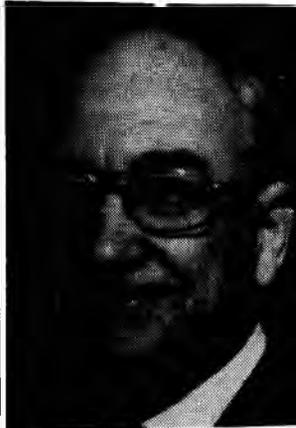
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The Editor's Pen

Flavil H. Nichols

My Valedictory Editorial



Flavil Nichols
I love this church, and want to see all of its work prosper and succeed. Accordingly I can sincerely assure our readers that I am praying for the new editor, and wish him only "good success" (Joshua 1:8).

"Valedictory" denotes a "leave-taking," or "a farewell address." Since I am not physically departing, this may not be the best choice of words -- but I can think of no better. As this transition began, my wife and I bought a house on Airport Road (at 13th Street N.E. --exactly one mile north of U.S. 78 at the Food-World/McDonald intersection), and moved more than a year ago. I do not intend to cease to preach as I have opportunities. We shall maintain our membership at Sixth Avenue, while I preach in meetings, speak on lectureships, or wherever I am wanted. I also anticipate doing some writing.

Sermon Outlines On Computer Disks?

All across the country I am told that few men are referred to more frequently, or are more often quoted by faithful gospel preachers, than Gus Nichols. Although all of Dad's books long have been out of print, yet requests for them still come. I am exploring the feasibility of issuing some of his sermon outlines on computer disks, rather than printing another book of them.

When I buy a book of outlines, as I prepare to use one of them, the first thing I do is type it up, and make it my very own by adding to it, or rearranging it to suit my own style. By putting out a disk of outlines for computers, each preach can far more readily and quickly study the material on his own screen. He can "personalize" the material by adding his own introduction, illustrations, etc. Some may wish to divide one outline into two (or more) in a series, add (or delete) points, or type out the scriptures referred to, etc. I should be happy to hear from preachers and other Bible students regarding this idea. Please address your response to this proposal to me at my home address, below.

Paul's address to the Ephesian elders is superb! "Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set

foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishop, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock: and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day, with tears. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified . . ." (Acts 20:18-32, A.S.V.).

Proper Addresses

After this date, any personal correspondence for me should be sent to

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My telephone number is (205) 221-9496.

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Pardon Vs. Parole

Don Williams

Into the room walks case #7234-71, a prisoner who is now out on parole. Although out of jail, he will be answerable to the court system for two years. During that time, he will have to report to his parole officer every week for two years; and, at the same time, he must maintain good behavior and "keep clean." Any violation, any offense whatsoever, and he will be back into jail quickly. His sentence stands as it was -- guilty and convicted of a crime. Such is stated on his permanent criminal record.

Into the room walks another man. He too did something that many would look upon as a violation of the law. Yet, because of circumstances known only to the judge, he has been acquitted of all charges and released from any penalty that might have come his way. Beside his name in the books, one word is written that explains it all: **Pardoned.**

What does God do for us when we commit sin against him, and then comply with his terms of forgiveness? Friends, I've looked it up, and the word PAROLE is not found in Holy Writ. God "forgives" and "pardons" us for the sins that we commit. Listen to the scriptures: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to FORGIVE us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will FORGIVE their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

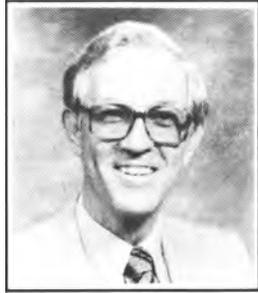
The word "pardon" is found nineteen times in the Bible. Micah asks, "Who is a God like unto thee, that PARDONETH iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his mercy forever, because he DELIGHTETH IN MERCY" (Micah 7:18). Isaiah encourages the wicked to "forsake his way, and the

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New Gospel Journal Launched



Thomas B. Warren



Garland Elkins

(Editor's Note: I am happy to give space in these columns to the following announcement, and urge elders and preachers everywhere to send in your request without delay. I also believe every Christian will profit from this new journal. There is no competition between lighthouses!

--Flavil H. Nichols, Editor.

A major new gospel journal called "POWER" will soon be published by the Southaven Church of Christ, a congregation located in north Mississippi, just south of Memphis. According to Garland Elkins, minister at Southaven, "POWER" will be published quarterly, beginning in the fall of this year. Southaven will also host the first annual **POWER LECTURES** which will be held August 27-31, 1989. The theme for the lectures will be "THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD."

Thomas B. Warren will serve as Editor of "POWER." Warren has written for the **GOSPEL ADVOCATE** for more than twenty years and served for twenty-one years as editor of **THE SPIRITUAL SWORD**. The Managing Editor will be Garland Elkins. Elkins served for fifteen years as the associate editor of **THE SPIRITUAL SWORD**. Elkins began work as full-time minister for the Southaven congregation in July, 1988. Many of the outstanding writers of the brotherhood are already committed to be regular writers for the journal.

"POWER" has been positioned as an issue-oriented, not a person-oriented, journal. It will deal with whether statements and positions are true or false. There will be no personal attacks. However, when the occasion seems to the editorial staff (and whatever writers may be involved), operating under the guidelines of the elders, to warrant documentation for a statement (from a book, journal, oral statement), that documentation will be given. (POWER holds that documentation of a statement does not per se involve a personal attack).

According to Thomas B. Warren, "POWER" will be concerned for two basic things:

1. To uphold the truth not merely a religious doctrine; and,

Pardon Vs. Parole

Continued from page 2

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" (Isaian 55:7).

Two years ago I was talking with a young man who needed to become a Christian. I explained to him that if he complied with the will of God in becoming a New Testament Christian, being baptized for the forgiveness of sins, that all of his sins would be washed away and forgiven. Having heard that, he exclaimed, "That's amazing!" And then I said to him, "That's why we call it 'Amazing Grace!'"

--Route 2, Box 713, Guin, AL 35563.

2. To oppose every false way.

"We will be deeply concerned to promote the great truths of the Bible," Warren said. He continued, listing such great truths as; men must know God and his Son (John 17:3); men must truly trust in him (Romans 4:20-21), men must love him with all of their hearts (Matthew 22:34-40; men must be obedient to the truth in becoming Christians (John 8:32; Matthew 7:21-23; Galatians 3:26-27); and Christians must obey him in their daily lives (II Peter 1:5-11; Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 2:10). "We are committed to every truth taught in the Bible," the editor proclaimed.

Warren continued his description of "POWER" by saying that the journal is committed to loving, but strong opposition to such doctrines as are currently being taught (even in the Lord's church) as the following:

1. That no man can really know the truth (Jesus said they can, John 8:32).

2. That one can understand the Bible without reasoning correctly; and that things which are taught implicitly are not and cannot--be binding on any man. We challenge any man to point out the explicit statement in the Bible which says - just so

many exact words -- that he (say for example, John Q. Smith who lives, say in some specific town in New Hampshire) is amenable to the gospel and, to be saved, must both believe and obey it!

3. That "Christian unity" is so important that it must be gained even at the expense of truth.

4. That God allows men to do, without sins, any and everything which the Bible does not explicitly forbid.

These four, and many similar ones, are all false doctrines. The journal "POWER" is set to stand "foursquare" against every false way. This standing will be done in Christian love, but, God being our helper, it will be done.

The publishers of "POWER" ask for the help of all concerned brethren in this great effort. **ELDERS AND PREACHERS WILL RECEIVE POWER AT NO COST, UPON REQUEST.** (However, any contribution would be appreciated). Others may receive "POWER" for only \$5.00 per year. **PLEASE SEND REQUESTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:**

POWER
P.O. Box 128
Southaven, MS 38671

My Valedictory Editorial

Continued From Page 2

To send business correspondence regarding Words Of Truth to any other address delays it.

Farewell

It has been a pleasure to "preach the word" through this medium over the past years. I have sought to publish only such articles as those which

"speak forth WORDS OF TRUTH and soberness" (Acts 26:25), and which speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). May this means of teaching be even more fully utilized. To our readers I adapt an expression from the Bible: "Finally, brethren, farewell" (II Corinthians 13:110).

Sheep Need Shepherds (No. 2)



Dean Fugett

I am fully convinced that the major source of trouble in the Lord's church today is inadequate or poor leadership. Even the problems caused by other elements within a congregation could be minimized or prevented by the wisdom and prudent action of good elders. As problems continue to arise to devastate many congregations, the need is going to become even more apparent to more people for well-organized BIBLICAL training of men for the work of bishops. Dedicated congregations will seek out men and materials true to the Book, and to God's purpose, to teach classes and present workshops not only for prospective elders, but for whole congregations.

We need to keep the local congregation free from either of two extremes: (1) that elders can "lord it over the church," keeping finances and programs secret from members; and (2) that elders have NO authority, but serve only in the capacity of examples, with no decision-making power.

CONGREGATIONS NEED TO BE INFORMED: Many in the pews have come into the church in recent years. A new generation have not heard the lessons that many of us were privileged to hear on scriptural organization, and church government. Many congregations have had unnecessary problems due to the lack of understanding of (1) the obligations and qualifications of elders, AND (2) the responsibility of the congregation to these elders. When there is confusion of these responsibilities, there will be confusion within the ranks. An informed congregation will experience less friction in its activities where there is mutual understanding by elders and members of rights and responsibilities, duties and obligations.

PROSPECTIVE ELDERS NEED TO BE INFORMED: Many men have misunderstood the office (work) of bishops. Some have thought the work to be that of "bosses." Others have considered themselves simply as figureheads, examples, with no power or authority without consulting with the whole congregation or calling a business meeting. These misunderstandings have led to conflict, strife, and hard feelings. Brethren have been alienated, and congregations have split. Men who understand what their duty is, the limits of their authority, and what is expected of them -- by God,

Continued On Page 4

Our Response To God's Forgiveness

Don Williams

As we dealt with in the article, **Pardon Vs. Parole**, God completely pardons us when we sin, we repent, and scripturally seek forgiveness. John expresses it so well when he writes to Christians... "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to CLEANSE us from ALL unrighteousness" (I John 1:9, emphasis mine). The wonderful love of God for man is seen in his complete cleansing, and washing away, of his sins, conditional upon the repentance and confession of sins.

What should be our response to such pardon? How should WE forgive others because of how God has forgiven us? Let me first suggest some wrong ways that I have seen "forgiveness" extended.

First, there are some who choose never to forgive others. Unlike Peter, who asked the Lord how often he should forgive someone (Matthew 18:20), there are some who never extend forgiveness. It is recorded in history that General Oglethorpe was talking to a denominational preacher. He said proudly to him, "Sir, I never forgive, and I never forget." To which the preacher replied, "Well, Sir, I hope that you never sin!" It is most hypocritical to ask God to forgive us, while we do not extend mercy and forgiveness unto others (Matthew 18:32-33).

Others offer what I call "At arms-length forgiveness," or "Probationary forgiveness." Simply stated, they say: "I will forgive, BUT I will be watching you! and if you 'mess up' again, I will withdraw the forgiveness I originally offered you." Such "forgiveness" is cold and hard, for it extends no mercy unto the one desiring forgiveness. It places them in the role of a prisoner on probation who must maintain "good behavior" in order not to go back to jail. What would have happened had the Lord placed Peter on such "forgiveness" terms after he had denied Jesus the first time? He would not have preached the wonderful sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), nor would he become a "pillar" in the church (Galatians 2:9). His two wonderful books, I & II Peter, might well not have been written, for he might well have ceased to follow Christ, having to live under "enslaved sentencing" of "probationary forgiveness." May we always thank God that he does not place us on a "trial basis" when he forgives us!

How then should we forgive others? **Lovingly and Completely**, just as God forgives us. Listen to Jesus as he says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). Mark's account makes it even more plain when he records this message from Christ: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses; but if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25-26).

To refuse to forgive others when they ask us is

being hypocritical. To ask forgiveness for our mistakes, when we refuse to forgive others of their mistakes against us, is most contradictory. John says that it also makes us a liar. In I John 4:20-21, he writes, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment

have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." Let us be a people of forgiveness. Let us realize, when people desire and ask for forgiveness, that they are the same as we. Let us thank God that "he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

--Route 2, Box 713, GuinP, AL 35563.

A Time For Concern



Winfred Clark

ignore the real facts in the case to say open fellowship is not becoming more and more popular. When men see no reason to refuse fellowship to those who use the instrument in worship, it is surely a time for concern. The Bible still says, "worship him in spirit and truth" John 4:24. That surely means in harmony with the truth. That means with the support of the truth. There is no such for the mechanical instrument.

2. When worldliness has a field day, it is time for

It is becoming more and more apparent that there is cause for concern for the church for which our Lord died. He was concerned enough to die for it (Ephesians 5:25). Paul was concerned enough to care (II Corinthians 11:28). We believe it is surely time for concern now.

1. When open fellowship becomes the norm, it is a time for concern.

One would have to ignore the real facts in the case to say open fellowship is not becoming more and more popular. When men see no reason to refuse fellowship to those who use the instrument in worship, it is surely a time for concern. The Bible still says, "worship him in spirit and truth" John 4:24. That surely means in harmony with the truth. That means with the support of the truth. There is no such for the mechanical instrument.

2. When worldliness has a field day, it is time for

concern. To oppose "social drinking" is an unthought of thing in many circles. When members of the Lord's body can live like the devil everyday of the week and then think they can come before the Lord in the "beauty of holiness" on the Lord's day, it is time for concern. We are still taught to "abstain from every appearance of evil."

3. When the plea for moderation is called compromise, it is time for concern. Many of my brethren are well aware of the fragmentation and suspicion that rages in this brotherhood. They are raising their voices in real concern. They will not longer have a part in that which will create pseudo issues nor will they have a part in making a hobby of some issue. They will have no part in opposing something just because some friend happens to oppose it. The cause of Christ is too big and worth more than this. These men are not about to be intimidated. The cry for "balance" will be heard again and again until we get back to the plea of the Restoration, "In matters of faith, UNITY, In matters of opinion, LIBERTY, and in all things, CHARITY." We refuse to be carried to the right or the left SO HELP US GOD.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Sheep Need Shepherds (No. 2)

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and by the congregation -- will function properly.

EARLY PREPARATION NEEDS TO BE ENCOURAGED: Dutiful elders do not just "happen." Neither are they those who have been chosen at the last moment from men who suddenly found themselves facing the office (or work), with pressure put upon them to accept that for which they had made no serious and purposeful preparation. No individual should await an emergency before preparing. We each need to begin to prepare early in life for the work in the kingdom of God. I cannot stress enough that congregations, individuals, and young men, begin NOW to prepare themselves for scriptural organization. I truly believe that there is greater need now in these perilous times for great elders than there is for preachers. True elders COULD perform the work of preaching the word in the congregation; but preachers cannot neces-

sarily function as substitutes for the elders. Brothers, begin now to prepare to be an elder in the Lord's church.

If men are not prepared for this work by life and purpose, some ill-informed members of some local congregations will suggest that men be placed into the position of "leader" or "elder" as "the best that we have available." Brethren, "the best we have available" is not good enough if they do not meet the qualifications given by God. We do not believe God will accept "sprinkling" as the "best available" substitute for baptism! Nor should we ever be content to accept anything less than what God has specified in organization, worship, or work. SHEEP NEED GOOD SHEPHERDS!

--1820 Cedar Grove Rd. Cave City, AR 72521.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad,
Words of Truth a

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Why We Should Believe In Christ



Flavil H. Nichols

(Editor's Note: The following is the first installment of the sermon text delivered by brother Flavil H. Nichols at Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Sunday morning, December 25, 1988. I am happy to commend it to you. David Wade, Editor).

The world's attention is annually riveted upon the birth of Jesus. Some truly

believe he lived. Why do you believe it? Why do you have any faith in him? It is not sufficient to say that we must believe in order to be saved; there must be convincing evidences which would persuade intelligent, reasoning beings, to believe in him. Now, why do you believe in Jesus?

Christians ought to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you . . ." (I Peter 3:15). So we ought to be able to give a reason for our faith in Christ. Why do you believe in Jesus Christ? I want to present to you several reasons why we should believe in Jesus Christ, and why we do believe in him.

1. The historical records show that at his birth the announcement was made by the angels of God that he was born. In Luke chapter 2, the shepherds were out watching their flocks by night when an angel of God made the first announcement of the birth of Jesus. That was enough to make the world take notice of the fact that he was born. But the angels' announcement said, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior." I believe in Jesus as my Savior because the angels said he would be "a savior, which is Christ the Lord."

God the Father testified of Jesus that he is "my

Son." At his baptism, God spoke from heaven and said, "This is my beloved Son." I believe in him because of that historical record in Matthew 3, that God said, "This is my beloved Son."

I believe in him because Jesus took 3 reasonable honorable men (Peter, James and John) on the Mount of Transfiguration and they heard God say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:1-5). I believe in him because God testified, more than once, that "this is my Son."

The Holy Spirit sanctioned Jesus. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove and abode upon him. John the Baptist had been given a sign that on whomsoever he saw this happen, "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33). Thus the Holy Spirit testified of the outstanding nature of this person, Jesus of Nazareth. John, the apostle writes, that God gave not "the Spirit by measure" to Jesus (John 3:34, A.S.V.). God did not give him the Holy Spirit "by measure," but in an unlimited measure, without measure.

2. The greatness of Jesus is a second reason why we should believe in him. When a great person is present, other people recognize it, even though they themselves may be great. Imagine for a moment that you are sitting in a room talking with the governor of your state, and in walks the President of the U.S.A. Don't you know that your governor would recognize the greatness of the office of the President. The greatness of one individual is recognized by others, even though they themselves may be great, and may occupy high positions.

When H. G. Wells was asked to list the world's six greatest characters, he put Jesus of Nazareth the first name on the list. A great historian, and himself (I understand) an unbeliever, put Jesus of Nazareth as the first name on the list of the world's greatest characters.

Jesus was recognized as great by others. The

angel Gabriel told Mary, "He shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest" (Luke 1:32). Jesus fulfilled that greatness. He was great. Notice how great he was. Who recognized him as being great?

There had never been a man born of woman greater than John the Baptist. Jesus, himself, said (Matthew 11:11) that Moses, Elijah, David, Solomon, -- none of them were greater than John the Baptist. Here comes Jesus of Nazareth to be baptized by this great man and John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14). He recognized the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth. I believe in him because he was recognized by other great personages as great.

Furthermore, in Luke 5, the apostle Peter said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man. O Lord." The apostle Peter, great as he was, felt inferior to Jesus, so far inferior that he did not feel worthy to be in his company.

In Luke 23, the day Jesus was executed, the Roman captain in charge of the execution squad that day, when he saw the earthquake and the things that were done, said "Truly, this was the son of God." We think of military men as being hardened steel, and braced against cruelties, yet this experienced centurion confessed, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Another great man among the Jews had such a reputation that he was one of the bitterest foes of Christianity, Saul of Tarsus. The things that would have been gain to him in any pursuits among the Jews would have given him great recognition. He was in favorable standing with the officials, and obtained letters of authority to a foreign capital, Damascus, over in Syria. When Jesus convinced Saul that he was raised from the dead, "that I am alive again," Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This great man, Saul of Tarsus,

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Words Of Truth

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 --Acts 26:25

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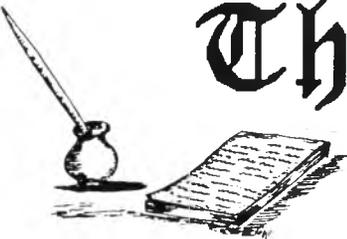
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Editorial

"Hast Thou Found Me, O Mine Enemy?"



Bobby Duncan

The above words were spoken by Ahab, wicked king of Israel, to Elijah, the prophet of God (I Kings 21:20). Through conspiracy and murder Jezebel had obtained for Ahab the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite (I Kings 21:1-16). Ahab had gone down to possess the vineyard, and the Lord had sent Elijah to rebuke him and to pronounce judgment upon him because of his wickedness.

Ahab considered Elijah his number one enemy because Elijah had done all within his power to turn Ahab away from his ungodliness. The infamous Jezebel, whose very name is synonymous with evil, had influenced her husband greatly against Elijah and for wickedness. What Ahab failed to realize in that had he listened to Elijah, instead of Jezebel, from the beginning things would have been different with him, and his name would not today be a hiss and a by-word. What a tragedy that the very man whose warnings and admonitions could have meant so much to the king of Israel was considered to be the king's worst enemy!

But this is not the only case on record of one who was hated for trying to change the course of those bent on sin and rebellion. In the very next chapter of First Kings, we find Ahab and the king of Judah deliberating whether to do battle against the Syrians in Ramoth-gilead. Four hundred false prophets had said: "Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king" (I Kings 22:6). But the king of Judah was not impressed. He inquired if there were not a genuine prophet of the Lord who could

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David Wade

I am glad to know that they are nearby, and can be called upon for, indeed, their help will be needed.

Also, I am grateful to the elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ for having selected me to shoulder the ministerial responsibilities, and now to serve as editor of WORDS OF TRUTH. My family and I celebrated our first anniversary at Sixth Avenue the first Sunday in April. Our work with the church has been a most challenging and enjoyable experience.

I can state with confidence that WORDS OF TRUTH has never strayed from its original purpose. We now look to the future and trust we shall go forward in the same course of the paper's original intent. In order to accomplish this goal, I will need the continued help of all who have been faithful to write articles for the paper. Proper research and good writing takes much more time and effort than most realize. Please continue your contributions to the paper, and your articles will be given full consideration.

Also, I want to urge others to write articles for WORDS OF TRUTH. Write on your favorite subject, or on some topic you believe the readers need to consider. Submit your articles, typewritten and double spaced. If you are citing any other versions than King James or American Standard, please indicate the version you are using.

In this, my first issue, it is appropriate to state the editorial policy of WORDS OF TRUTH. There is no better way to do this than to reproduce the article by the late beloved brother Gus Nichols, which appeared in the first issue dated December 6, 1963. The article is reproduced here in its entirety, except the last three paragraphs, which talk about subscriptions, mailing schedule, etc.

Editorial Policy Gus Nichols

This being the first issue of "WORDS OF TRUTH", it is thought good to say a few words about the policy by which our new paper is to be molded and fashioned. Just as congregations are

Beginning with this issue I shoulder the awesome responsibility of serving as acting editor of WORDS OF TRUTH. A debt of gratitude is owed to the three editors who have preceded me, brethren Gus Nichols, Bobby Duncan, and Flavil Nichols. I am happy to feature articles by the two living former editors in this issue. They have

determined to know what kind of preachers they invite to preach in their meetings, they have right to know what kind of paper or literature they bring into the congregation for reading and study.

The following shall be the policy by which "WORDS OF TRUTH" is to be governed. Every writer should keep this policy in view in all his writing for the paper, so as to make his teaching and writing conform to this policy.

1. We want the truth, and nothing but the truth taught in the paper. We want to make it true to its name "WORDS OF TRUTH" (Acts 26:25). We have no confidence nor respect for error and false teaching. Only the truth can make men free and build up the church (Jn. 8:32, Acts 20:32). We love people and shall always strive to please men in all things so long as no truth is to be compromised (I Cor. 10:33).

We could not ignore any truth to please men and be servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10). We claim no infallibility of our own, but we do believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God (II Tim. 3:15-17). We propose to be governed by the word of God in all matters of faith. This was the basis of unity taught by the apostles and agreed upon by the pioneers of the restoration movement (Jude 3; I Cor. 16:13; II Cor. 13:5-6; Heb. 12:2; Phil. 1:27).

In matters of opinion, or of expediency, where God has left things to human judgment, we propose to leave men free to exercise their liberty of choice. Where God left something loosed, we shall not either bind it, or submit to any human law binding it. Neither shall we loose what God has bound (Mat. 16:19). We believe the word of God is all the religious guide needed in matters of faith. We propose nothing as terms of unity and fellowship other than faith in Christ and loving obedience to him in all things (Heb. 5:8-9). However, this includes much more than many have ever comprehended it to embrace.

2. It shall be the policy of "WORDS OF TRUTH" to present a well balanced type of teaching, the subject matter to be determined by the need of our times and of any demanding occasion and circumstance. We want the reading of the paper to contribute to a well informed, happy and united membership in any church into which it is permitted to come.

3. We shall encourage our local preachers and others to write for "WORDS OF TRUTH." This will in itself be good training for them, and make the paper interesting to the friends of these writers. Mature Christians are quick to be patient with beginners and to rejoice in their visible progress. The crying need of the Church is for an efficient leadership, and this cannot be had without the training of experience and work. Of course, we solicit good, strong articles from brethren every-

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"Hast Thou Found Me, O Mine Enemy?"

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be consulted in reference to this matter. The king of Israel informed him that there was, indeed, a prophet of whom they could inquire. "But," he added, "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (v. 8). Now, it is not difficult to determine why a true prophet never prophesied any good concerning the king of Israel. Just how much good could a person say about Ahab and tell the truth? But Micaiah was hated by Ahab, not for any evil which he had done him, but because Micaiah had warned Ahab time and again against his wickedness.

Naaman was angry with Elisha for telling him how to be cured of his leprosy (II Kings 5:11). The Galatians made Paul their enemy, because he told them the truth (Gal. 4:16). And the Son of God was hated and crucified by those whom He came to save.

One of the tragedies of our time is the failure on the part of some to discern friend and foe. Like Ahab of old, we often classify as enemies those who see flaws in our lives and would turn us away from evil. Naturally we like to think that all is well

Editorial

Continued From Page 2

where who are loyal to the truth, both in teaching and practice.

4. It shall be the guiding purpose to make "WORDS OF TRUTH" conform to the principles of good journalism. Therefore, we shall strive to be courteous and kind in dealing with sin and sinners, as well as in our discussion of all matters where prejudice and tempers may be involved. But this does not mean that the truth will be watered down and made ineffective. We realize the fact that the truth in its own right and power is often blunt and painful as well as sharper than any two-edged sword, but we do not wish to get between the truth and the people and hinder its work of conversion and transformation by detracting from its power (Acts 14:1).

5. In our dealings with others, and in matters of controversy, we shall strive to be governed by the "Golden Rule" to treat others as we would like to be treated (Mat. 7:12). If our teaching of the truth provokes controversy, and the need arises for our defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17), we shall continue in its defense long enough to get the job done, and then return to the main line of teaching the truth in a positive sort of way.

6. We shall ever keep in mind the only scriptural objective in publishing such a paper, and that is, to do all the good possible and no harm whatsoever. We shall strive to make the paper a real blessing to all who may read it. We actually believe it will build up the members of the church so that they will give more, pray more, and live more nearly like Jesus lived, and if it does this, it will more than pay for itself, even in dollars and cents. The teaching program of the Lord for his church is the greatest program in the world (Mat. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; I Tim. 3:15). The farmer who is too stingy to plant enough seed will pay dearly for his lack of vision and unwillingness to invest. He must sow bountifully in order to reap bountifully. Brethren will do more, live right and do better when they are taught better. To this end we launch our paper in earnest, fervent prayer and solicit your confidence, your influence and support.

with us, and it is unpleasant to learn otherwise. But one who honestly calls our attention to some flaw in our life should not be considered an enemy for so doing, any more than a doctor would be considered an enemy for telling us we had some ailment that needed treatment. On the other hand, one who sought to minimize the importance of some damnable flaw in our life should not be considered a friend, any more than a doctor would be considered a friend who sought to minimize the danger of a deadly disease.

In the church those who faithfully preach the truth, renouncing sin and error, often are considered enemies to those they are trying to help. If one preaches against the sin of drunkenness he becomes enemy to the drunkard. If he preached against adultery he is enemy to the adulterer. He is the enemy to those who wear immodest clothing if he preaches against such. He becomes the enemy of those who are guilty of teaching false doctrine or engaging in unscriptural religious practices if he preaches the truth in reference to these matters.

We would not want to leave the impression that such is always the case, for it is not. There are many, like Nineveh of old, who appreciate a warning of impending destruction, and who will gen-

uinely repent and seek to conform every aspect of their lives to the will of God. To these the one sounding the warning is a friend.

In these perilous times, we desperately need to know who our friends really are. Our friends are not necessarily those who tell us what we enjoy hearing. Neither is one necessarily an enemy if he tells us things that are unpleasant to hear. Those who constantly compliment us are not necessarily our friends. Neither is one an enemy simply because he criticizes us.

Those who allow us to go on and on in sin without any effort to restrain us are not our friends. And those who do try to restrain us are not our enemies. We may call them "watchdogs, witch hunters, snake killers," or some other catchy name to show our contempt for them and their efforts. But we should call them our friends, for this is what they really are if they have our interest and the interest of God's kingdom at heart.

While we abhor the disposition to be critical or to find fault, we are thankful for those who are concerned enough about the purity of the church to sacrifice personal popularity if necessary to call attention to activities which will lead ultimately to the destruction of precious souls.

Why We Should Believe In Christ

Continued From Page 1

acknowledged the greatness of Jesus. So I believe in Jesus because of his greatness, as these incidents illustrate.

To show you further how great he was, every time you write a letter, draw up a deed, or sign any document that must be dated, you recognize that Jesus once lived. Time is even marked and counted from the date of his birth. We talk about things that happened before the Korean War, or the Vietnam War, or the first or second World War -- big events. But the whole world recognizes the greatness of Jesus by marking time from his birth: B.C. means before Christ, while "A.D." is the abbreviation for the Latin "Anno Domini" -- the "year of our Lord." That shows he is great.

There are many monuments that testify to his greatness. One of these is baptism. Baptism is a living monument to the fact that Jesus died, was buried and rose again. In the likeness of his death, we "die" to the love of sin in repentance; and we are "buried" in baptism in the likeness of his burial in the grave; then we are "raised to walk in newness of life" like he arose and lives again. I believe in Jesus because baptism signifies that he once lived, died, was buried and rose again!

For 1500 years -- from Moses to Christ -- the Jews (Exodus 20:1-2, 8-9; 31:12-17) had worshiped on Saturday. They broke off sabbath observance, and in one generation began to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Why? That is the day Jesus rose from the dead (Mark 16:9). The first day of the week is a monument, rising up 2,000 years high, as a testimony that Jesus arose! Some church

historians tell us that by the end of the First Century, there were three million Christians. Why were they worshipping on the first day of the week instead of Saturday? Because Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9). That is the day the saints worshipped in the New Testament. I believe in Jesus because of the fact that generally our factories are still, and our industries cease activity (as a rule) on the first day of the week. That is the day of New Testament worship.

I believe in Jesus Christ because of the Lord's Supper. This communion of his body, his blood, testifies that there was a man named Jesus who died a vicarious death. He suffered the innocent for the guilty, the sinless for the sinful (I Peter 3:18). The bread tells us his body was a sacrifice for our sins. The cup tells us that his blood was shed for the remission of our sins. But it is a historical fact that he died and gave his life for our sins.

I believe in Jesus because of the last part of the Bible -- from Matthew through Revelation. The New Testament is here! The New Testament tells us he lived, died, and established his church after he was raised from the dead! The New Testament stands 2,000 years high as a monument to the fact that Jesus is the Christ.

I believe in Jesus because of these evidences of his life: 1) because of his greatness, 2) because of the evidences of his actually having lived here on the earth.

3. I believe in Jesus because in his life he fulfilled so many, many prophecies. I heard brother Batsell

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Why We Should Believe In Christ

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Barrett Baxter say that there are more than 200 prophecies that were fulfilled in the person and life of Jesus Christ. Many of them were fulfilled during the last week of his earthly sojourn and in his resurrection from the dead. These prophecies were written in the Old Testament. It would have been impossible for unaided man, natural man, uninspired man to have written in detail the life of Christ before he was ever born, and tell about his life like the Old Testament does.

I do not have time to name all of those prophecies, but think of a few of them with me: 1) God said he would be the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15); and the virgin birth of Jesus, his conception of a virgin, was a biological miracle! He was seed of woman. 2) Micah said he would be born in Bethlehem of Judea; but Joseph and Mary lived at Nazareth. What is going to happen? Is he going to be born in the wrong city? The law was passed that all Jews must return to the city of their ancestors, the city of the fathers, to register to pay taxes, to be enrolled. Because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, he had to go back to Bethlehem, the city of David. While he and Mary were there, Jesus was born -- in the right city! An accident? No! God foresaw this -- and Jesus fulfilled the scriptures!

Another Old Testament prophet said, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1). How is he going to be born in Bethlehem, and yet be called out of Egypt? Herod sought to kill him. To save his life, the angel of God told Joseph and Mary to take the child and flee, and they went to Egypt! When Herod died, the angel told him, 'you can come back home now' and they came back. "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." Accident? No. The inspired prophecies were fulfilled.

His miracles also fulfilled prophecies. In Isaiah 35 there is a list of several miracles which would be performed by the Messiah. The dumb would speak, the deaf would hear, the blind would see, et al. These miracles Jesus performed -- fulfilling those very prophecies! He stood up in Nazareth and read from the scriptures and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16). So there they were seeing and hearing the fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies about his working miracles. Nicodemus testified, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:1-2). Nicodemus said, "The way we know you are from heaven is: your miracles prove it! You are not a deceiver, and we as a people are not deceived." They knew the miracles were real and genuine; Nicodemus admitted it.

In the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus could not have "fooled" that many people -- 5,000 men -- and make them think that they had plenty to eat when they were still hungry! There was no deceit, no deception. It was a genuine miracle. But to further show that there is no trickery about it, instead of just the five loaves and two small fishes

that they had to start with, they picked up 12 baskets of fragments that were left over!

Another miracle that could not be refuted (and none of them could be) but one that is so outstanding that nobody could refute it is in John 11. Lazarus had been dead four days. His sister said, 'Don't move the stone away from the tomb. There will be foul odors coming out of there if you do.' Jesus said, "Roll the stone away." Then he called, "Lazarus, come forth," and he that had been dead for four days walked out of that tomb, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. Jesus said, "Loose him and let him go." The next chapter, John 12, tells us that the Jews tried to kill Lazarus, because by him many had believed on Jesus. I, too, would have believed -- if I had been there! I know that would have convinced me that he must be from heaven! A man who can raise to life again one that had been dead and buried four days! His miracles are irrefutable. There is no deceit in them. Zechariah 12:10 foretold that he would be crucified and he was not stoned, as the Jews executed trespassers: but he was crucified. The prophet said, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." They "pierced his hands and his feet." Isaiah also said he would be "numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). A thief was crucified on either side of him (John 19:18). Isaiah said he would intercede for his murderers (Isaiah 53:12); and Luke 23 informs us that he prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He precisely fulfilled the prophecies!

Amos foretold that the sabbath would end when the sun should go down at noon, and God would darken the earth in a clear day (Amos 8:9). That happened the day Jesus was crucified! He nailed the old law to the cross, taking it out of the way -- and the sabbath ended (Colossians 2:14-17). That was the end of it. The sabbath was terminated, because it was part of that old covenant, thus it was nailed to the cross.

It was also prophesied that he would make his grave "with the rich" (Isaiah 53:9). After he died, Joseph of Arimathea, "a rich man and a mighty counselor, who also himself waited for the kingdom of heaven," asked permission to bury the corpse of Jesus! Truly, he made his grave with the rich, just as he was with the wicked in his death -- was crucified between two thieves.

The Old Testament prophets foretold also that he "shall prolong his days" -- that is, he would rise from the dead (Isaiah 53:10). The New Testament abundantly proves that he is alive again! His precise fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies indicates clearly that we cannot ignore Jesus of Nazareth.

The climactic reason why I believe in him hinges on his resurrection. Why did he rise from the dead? Is his resurrection credible? Think back to the circumstances after being officially pronounced "dead" (Mark 15:44-45), he is put into that tomb. The enemies remembered that he had

claimed that he would rise again (Matthew 27:62-66). They got permission from the officials to station sentries on guard duty, lest his body be removed by his friends. The enemies did not want his body out -- they sought to make it impossible for his friends to get to it. The tomb was sealed by the Roman government, which means there was a death penalty for any unauthorized person to break that Roman seal. Despite the soldiers on guard duty, the third day the tomb was empty! What happened to his corpse? Where did it go? (1) If he was just a man, a deceiver, he could not have gone anywhere; he was dead! He could not have raised himself back to life. What happened to his corpse? (2) His enemies took precaution to see that his friends could not remove it. (3) His enemies did not want his corpse removed and they would not have removed it if they could. (4) The only other possibility is: God raised him from the dead! This is exactly what happened! This proves his deity! He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

His resurrection is the climaxing proof that he is the Christ. No imposter, no deceiver, could have raised himself -- and God would not have pawned a deceiver off on the world. Therefore, we know Jesus was no deceiver. He arose! Of the numerous witnesses mentioned as having seen him after he arose, more than 250 of them were still living 26 years later when Paul wrote I Corinthians 15:1-8, especially verse six. He said "the greater part" of those more than five hundred who saw him at one time -- more than two hundred fifty of them were still living. They saw him after he was raised from the dead. They knew the tomb was empty, because they saw the living Christ, the living Jesus.

There are many other proofs of his deity, his sonship, and they all testify that God approved of him. At his crucifixion, the veil of the temple was rent in two. You remember there were two compartments of that temple: the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. Into that second compartment, the High Priest alone could go once a year on the day of atonement. The beautifully embroidered linen veil separated the two sections; but when Jesus died, that veil was parted, rent from top to bottom (Matthew 27:1), signifying the termination of that Old Testament system. No mere man could have done that, started at the top, tearing it down to the bottom! If any man were going to rend that veil, he would have to tear it from the bottom to the top. But the Bible says it was torn the other way, from top to bottom. There was an earthquake at his death, so severe that the tombs were opened, but the sabbath is coming on! They just barely had time to bury Jesus, and so they had to leave those tombs open with their corpses still inside. However, on the first day of the week Jesus Christ was raised from the dead "very early in the morning" (Mark 16:2)!

(To Be Continued)



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Words Of Truth

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Words of Tri

—ACTS 20:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1989

NUMBER 19

"Who Hath Believed Our Report?"



Cecil May, Jr.

When New Testament writers quote the Old Testament, they sometimes use it typically, (Matt. 2:15; Hos. 1:1) or even allegorically (Gal. 4:22-24). Usually, however, they use Old Testament passages with exactly the meaning the Old Testament context itself suggests. If the New Testament student will turn to the Old

Testament passage cited and read its entire immediate context, he will often find his understanding of the New Testament passage greatly enriched. Often the New Testament writer chooses his quotation to bring to mind, not just the words quoted, but the whole thought of the passage cited. A case in point is the New Testament usage (John 12:38; Rom. 10:16) of Isaiah's question, "Who hath believed our report?" (Isa. 53:1).

In John 12, Jesus shows himself to be King by riding into Jerusalem "sitting on an ass's colt (John 12:15) to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy of the King coming "meek and lowly" (Zech. 9:9). A king coming on an ass's colt, instead of in a chariot with horses, would be akin to our President coming in a 1970 Chevy instead of a Cadillac limousine.

Jesus' "hour is come" (John 12:23). He is ready to declare himself King, but he wants to redefine what the Jews thought being king involved. The prophecy of Zechariah helped do that. He next speaks of being "lifted up from the earth . . . thus signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32-33). Then John says, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath

believed our report? and to whom the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:37-38).

That says, of course, that there are those who will not listen. They do not listen to Isaiah; they will not listen to Jesus. See how the whole point is enriched, however, by noting the context of the Isaiah passage. "Who hath believed our report?" are the opening words of Isaiah 53, the prophecy of the suffering, atoning work of God's servant. surely it was intended that we should recognize this context and the suitability of the question's application to those who were rejecting Christ and lifting him up in death.

In Romans 10, the topic is whether Israel's no longer being God's people mean God's promises to Israel have failed. Paul answers: God has not rejected them; they have rejected God by rejecting Jesus. Whoever will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. To call requires believing and

believing requires hearing. They have heard; therefore, they could believe, for "faith cometh by hearing." They do not believe, just as Isaiah said: "Who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:13-18).

Again, it is no mere coincidence that "Who hath believed?" comes from Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering of God's Messiah and in Romans is applied to those who refuse to believe that very truth.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. The best commentary on any Old Testament passage is a New Testament writer's inspired explanation of it. Never think the New Testament writers used Old Testament passages carelessly or without regard for their context. We should know the Old Testament and use it so well!

--Magnolia Bible College Kosciusko, Mississippi.

What Do You Do For Fun?

Jack W. Carter

Several years ago a Christian girl told me about an incident with a young man who had been asking to date her.

He was not a member of the church and they didn't have anything in common. She had turned him down twice and now she had said "no" to attending a rock concert with him.

In a kind of mock exasperation the young man asked, "What do you do for fun? You don't dance, you don't drink, you don't attend rock concerts, what do you do for fun?"

Though she related her answer to me in a way that made it seem as though it was a simple response, it was actually a classic message from all Christians with conviction.

To the young man she had replied, "For fun I get up in the morning without feeling embarrassed, ashamed and guilty about what I did the night before." The young man had nothing more to say.

It's true. That is fun! Come to think of it, there are many things in her life that are fun. She is married now to a fine Christian man. They have a little girl

and are building an outstanding Christian home together. I am thrilled thinking about the fun she is having.

She is having fun every day living without the affliction of deep scars and regrets from her past. It's fun getting all prettied up each afternoon to receive a husband home from work, knowing that he won't be stopping off at a local bar for a few with the boys.

It is fun knowing that while he is away from her, his Christian conduct won't allow infidelity or even flirting. It's fun watching him hold his little girl on his lap with loving protecting arms.

It's fun knowing that her little girl will never see her father in a drunken stupor or experimenting with drugs. It's fun living with the assurance that the home will be led by a spiritual leader who will guide each family member toward heaven.

The list of fun things for Christians is endless. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN???

--Via East Main Bulletin, Tupelo, MS.

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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I FIND THESE PERFECT

*What makes a perfect home? Not beam or rafter,
Or roof to shelter from the wind, and rain,
But homes are made of light, and love, and laughter,
A little heartache, and a bit of pain.*

*What makes a perfect child? Not frills and laces,
Or neat white linen suits, or stiff bow ties,
But eager little minds, and happy faces,
And love and trust that gleam from pure young eyes.*

*What makes a perfect meal? Not steaming dishes,
Nor gleaming silver, nor a linen spread,
But love, and friendly talk, and simple wishes,
And gratitude to God for giving bread.*

*What makes a perfect love? Not youth's caresses,
Nor all the ardor of a lover's touch,
But love is sacrifice, and heaven blesses
The hearts of those who love, and suffer much.*

*What makes a perfect world? Not every hour
A tank or bomber built by you and me,
But nations without greed and lust for power,
And friendly hands that clasp across the sea.*

*Oh, God! Be merciful to us as mothers
And fathers . . . all the world is in our hand.
Help us to guide and train the lives of others,
That perfect peace come soon to every land!*

—Mary Olex

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Honor . . . Thy Mother"



In this time of rampant divorce and family disintegration, it is very appropriate for us to reflect on the Biblical teachings regarding the calling, responsibility, and honor of Christian motherhood. It seems in our day that God's beautiful picture of the loving husband and wife, as devoted parents, with obedient

children, is a lost art. Christian mothers have a very important role to fulfill in perpetuating God's plan for the home.

First, your role as Christian wife and mother is your greatest calling in life. Uniquely, God has given you the power to produce another human being. At Cain's birth Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). Using the illustration of the mother's sorrow in labor and joy after birth, Jesus stresses the joy his resurrection would bring, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:21-22).

When a woman conceives, God places the very spirit of the child in the mother's womb. By giving birth to her child, the mother cooperates with God in one of his marvelous wonders. When contemplating how he came to be, David exclaimed, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

Each year thousands of sightseers visit the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. In the center section, which is open in front, sits a gigantic statue of Lincoln by Daniel Chester French. Who is greater of the two, the sculptor who carved the stone, or the mother who made the man? Lincoln said, "All that I am or can be, I owe to my angel mother . . . No man is poor who has had a godly mother."

While women may excel in many commendable endeavors outside the home, yet there is no greater calling than that of Christian wife and mother. She fulfills her unique role in God's plan which cannot be fulfilled by any other. As Emerson has said,

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

Second, the role of Christian wife and mother is a woman's heaviest responsibility. There is a sense in which her duty toward her husband is greater than her duty toward her children. The leaving of father and mother and cleaving to one's mate (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6) is the foundation on which a home is to be built. The house is not greater than its foundation (Matthew 7:24-27; I Corinthians 3:11). Children are properly loved and feel secure only when the marriage relationship is filled with love and is secure.

As Christian wife and mother, the home is first and foremost her domain. Wives and mothers are commanded to be "workers at home" (Titus 2:5 ASV), and to "guide the house" (I Timothy 5:14). The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is commended, not only for her industry outside the home, but also because, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (verse 27).

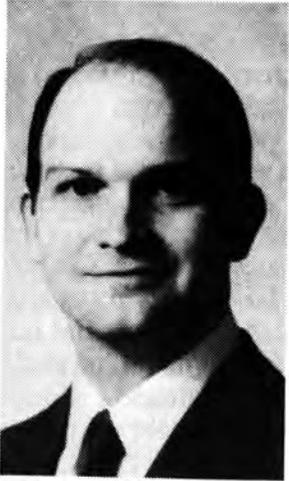
Furthermore, a mother bears a heavy responsibility as her child's first teacher. As a child, Timothy learned the holy scriptures from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). The Godly mother " . . . openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). It has been said that, "The mother in her office holds the key of the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin of character and makes the being, who would be a savage, but for her gentle cares, a Christian man! Then crown her the queen of the world" (Old Play).

Finally, every child should strive to bring honor to his mother. Children are commanded to "Honor thy father and mother . . ." (Ephesians 6:2 ASV). Honor is evidenced by obedience to godly parents (Ephesians 6:1). I ran across this poetic line which seems appropriate, "For God, who lives above the skies, Would look with vengeance in his eyes, If I should ever dare despise -- My mother." Every husband and child should strive to honor his godly wife and mother as proclaimed by Solomon, "Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:28).

"Honor . . . Thy Mother"

**A Gift Suggestion:
Send
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For A Year!**

God Is On The Throne - Not On Stage



Dalton Key

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in scripture as a friend to man (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), he is not some sort of "good buddy" to joke with or about. Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6), his ways remain higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:9), and his authoritative word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Revelation 20:12).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven detracts one bit or whit from his inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our reverence, thus we must serve him "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). Truly, reverence is "the very first element of religion" (Charles Simmons).

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalm 89:7). Worship performed "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving - they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist; but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or a rock concert. Whether our worship is that offered during a Sunday morning service, that which involves a lectureship assembly, or that which is engaged in by a zealous throng of young people attending a Youth Rally - regardless where, when, or by whom the worship is performed -- it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker's message or a vocal group's selection. We do not gather to pay homage to men, but to worship God. We do not come together as to a football game or a stage-band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained or sensually excited; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the purpose of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our Sunday assemblies, or one of our many youth gatherings, and note a marked difference between the worship of God and the Johnny Carson Show.

In the realm of worship, "zeal without knowledge" paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented and riotous assemblies. Most of our

denominational neighbors have long since gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christlike reverence for things holy. And may we teach our

children so.

Remember, our God is on the throne -- not on stage.

--P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67905.

Why We Should Believe In Jesus Christ

Flavil H. Nichols

(Continued From Last Week)

And "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection and went into the city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53). The fact that they were raised after his resurrection, accounts for his being referred to as "the first born among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). The people knew that their kinfolk who had been out there in that cemetery were alive again. This marvelous resurrection of many others after his resurrection proves that he is the Son of God (Matthew 27:51-54).

One of the greatest proofs of the deity of Jesus, one which establishes the genuineness of the evidence on which our faith rests, is the fact that his followers gave up everything, even life itself, in order to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. They spread the "gospel" (good news) to every creature (Colossians 1:23); and they preached it in spite of persecution! Driven away from home, their goods confiscated, they were beaten and killed -- yet, not one of them ever recanted, **not one!** Not one of those witnesses ever "took it back," or said "we have been lying about Jesus; he really is a deceiver!" Not one of them ever changed his story! They went to their death teaching and preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Does that not make you want to believe in him?

Jesus promised one thing with which I close this study. Peter had just said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16-18). Jesus promised that upon this fact, this fundamental truth -- that I am the Son of God -- "Upon this rock I will build my church." Jesus knew they were going to crucify him. He explained that in verse 20. He knew he was going to be crucified, but said he would "be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). So he said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell" (Hades) "shall not prevail against" this promise. The very existence of the church proves that Jesus is the Christ, that he is the Son of God! He built his church, despite the fact that he was killed before he got the job done. He did not intend to build it while he was here on earth, during his earthly life. This was his plan all the time, and he made it known to his apostles, foretelling it at least three times before he was crucified. He foresaw that he would be rejected by the Jews, be crucified, but the third day would rise again. So he confidently announced, "I will build my church." Keep in mind that he did not build the church during his lifetime. However, it is here! He built it after he was raised from the dead.

Christ established his church on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He told the apostles to stay in Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:46-47). They waited, as recorded in Acts 1. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8) -- and they did. Acts 2 fulfilled his predictions, his promises. On that day the gospel in full began to be preached, in the second chapter of Acts.

What began in Jerusalem Jesus said is for us today. Listen to him: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (that includes us!) "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). What began there is for us.

On that day the gospel began to be preached, this truth began to be preached, that Jesus is the Christ! "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). That same day about three thousand people in Jerusalem believed in his resurrection, and believed that he is the Son of God, that he is "both Lord and Christ," and they began to obey him.

Don't you believe in him? Is there not enough evidence to make you want to obey him like they obeyed him by faith? Your faith should be rooted in Jesus. My faith is not in a congregation, or in any preacher, or in any group of men; my faith is in Jesus! You need to anchor your faith in Jesus. Do you believe him? Listen to this warning, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:21). Now, it is either believe in Jesus, or else you will die in sin. I want you to think of one more verse, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Salvation is conditional on your faith in Christ. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines the Greek word *pistis* (which is translated faith) as "the conviction full of joyful trust that Jesus is the Messiah . . . conjoined with obedience." Won't you obey him now, by faith?

How To Live Life



W. A. Holley

As long as we remain on earth, we must live somehow -- whether profitable or unprofitable. We are here; and we are going to be here; so, why not try for the very best life possible?

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and

pursue it" (I Peter 3:10-11, A.S.V.).

All Christians are to strive earnestly that they "may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:1-3).

Continued On Page 4

Is There Nothing To Baptism?

Clifford Dixon

We often have people tell us that there is nothing to baptism but a form to get into the denomination of one's choice. Is this all there is to baptism?

If there is nothing to baptism then why did Christ command people to believe and be baptized to be saved? Mark 16:16 states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This is a complex declarative sentence of which "he" is the subject, and "shall be saved" the predicate. Who is the "he" that "shall be saved?" Is it the one who believes only? No! Is it the one who is baptized only? No! It is the one who is baptized only? No! It is the one who believes and is baptized. If there is something besides just a form in believing, there must be something besides just a form in being baptized since the Lord said both are necessary to be saved.

If there is nothing to baptism then why did Peter, in carrying out the Great Commission, tell people to repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins? Acts 2:37, 38, states, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." To whom did Peter promise the remission of sins? Was it to those who repented only? No! Was it to those who were baptized only? No! Remission of sins was promised to those who repented, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. If there is something besides just a form to repenting then there must be something besides just a form to being baptized.

If there is nothing to baptism then why did Ananias tell Saul of Tarsus to be baptized to wash away his sins? Paul, telling of his conversion, said, "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest now his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:12-16). There must be some connection between baptism and having one's sins washed away or the above statement would not have been made.

Yes, there is something to baptism and Paul tells us what it is in Romans 6:3-6. "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: 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." In this passage we see the following: (1) We are baptized into Jesus Christ where all scriptural blessings are found (Ephesians 1:3); (2) We are baptized into his death where he shed his blood, so we receive the benefits of that blood in being cleansed from our sins (John 19:34; Revelation 1:5, 6); (3) We are buried in baptism unto

death of our old sins and arise to walk in newness of life; (4) The body of sin is destroyed so we should not from that time forward serve sin. If you want these spiritual blessings you must submit to baptism.

Some people charge that if baptism is necessary to salvation then one would be saved by works and not by grace. Please give me the passage where baptism is called a work! If no works are to be done to be saved then one would be saved without faith, because it is called a work in the scriptures. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28,

29). If you say that one is saved without any works whatever you must be prepared to say that one is saved in unbelief. Such would be denying Mark 16:16 which states, "he that believeth not shall be damned." If faith is necessary to salvation then so is baptism as is seen by the same passage of scripture.

Yes, there is something to baptism, and therefore we must be careful that our baptism be according to the scriptures. This would be baptism upon the proper faith, repentance, and confession, by an immersion, and be done by the authority of Christ as given in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 15:15-16).

--Route 3, Box 62 Brewton, Alabama 36426.

How To Live Life

Continued From Page 3

Someone has said the whole drama of life consists in four basic "I wants:"

"I want to live.

I want to feel important.

I want a mate.

I want a variety of change."

While these "wants" may not be expressed in the finest manner, they do seem to represent some basic longings of the human heart.

Verily, all that we say here is based upon the predication that those who wish to live, properly, have heard and obeyed the Lord's gospel (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). One cannot really and truly "live" without having Jesus Christ as his constant companion (John 14:1-6, 15, 21-23; 15:14).

What are some rules that should govern the Christian's life? We shall note--

(1) Endeavor to be happy. Jesus taught his disciples the basic rules of happiness (Matthew 5:1-12). If you are not happy, why are you unhappy? One should never confuse "happiness" with "pleasure" (Isaiah 5:20-24).

To be happy, one must have a holy purpose of life, and then work diligently to achieve it (Philippians 2:1-5).

(2) Count life as a great blessing. Be zestful. Live, work, play, enjoy each day, because your life will end soon enough (Hebrews 9:27; Philippians 1:18; 2:16, 17, 18, 28; I Thessalonians 5:16). There is no sense in being mad at the world. Such an attitude often leads to suicide . . . God forbid!

(3) Learn (even if you must give up some of your pet peeves) to live in harmony (as far as your efforts are concerned) with others (Romans 12:18; Compare the New King James). Following the Golden Rule is always in order (Matthew 7:12). Sympathy, understanding, social adjustment, congeniality are traits of character all Christians desperately need.

(4) To live life as you should, you will need a keen sense of direction. If you don't know where you are going, you will likely end up somewhere else. To illustrate, a woman asked a boy, "How far is it to Smithville?" The boy answered, "About 24,996 miles if you continue in the same direction; but, if you will turn around and travel in the opposite direction, it is about 4 miles." How often do people travel in the wrong direction!

Dear Reader, try to live a balanced life, a life of moderation, a life of self-control (II Peter 1:5-11). Learn how to handle criticism (cf. Matthew 11:16-19; 9:10-13). Jesus was often subjected to criticism; but he never allowed it to turn him aside from his mission. Those who "fly off the handle" not only hurt themselves, but others as well.

(5) Never worry about yesterday, today, or tomorrow. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6, ASV). Put God and his kingdom first, then all things necessary will be added (Matthew 6:33-34). Prepare a worry box: write all your worries on a slip of paper, and put them inside it. When checked, you will see that most of your worries never come to pass. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you," is the answer to excessive and overpowering worry (I Peter 5:7).

(6) To live properly one needs a correct insight into one's own life. One needs to face the consequences of one's own conduct. Are we trying to live a lie? Will we acknowledge our own faults and shortcomings? (James 5:16; I John 1:6-7; Acts 8:22). David could never be right with God until he confessed his sins . . . the whole sordid affair with Bathsheba (II Samuel 11:1ff; Psalms 51:1ff).

(7) Develop a confidential relationship with someone: Your wife or husband, your mother or father, your preacher or doctor, your friend or neighbor. David and Jonathan had such a wonderful relationship (I Samuel 20:3-39; 23:16). You need someone to whom you can talk!

(8) Learn to laugh at yourself; don't take yourself too seriously. Gain great satisfaction from working to help others (Ephesians 4:26-28; Acts 20:35).

(9) When personal problems arise, attack them promptly and intelligently. Do not go off 'half-cocked.' Never permit your problems to eventually drown you. Frustration, sorrow, and disappointment can exercise a withering spell upon your efforts to serve the Master.

Happiness is like a beautiful butterfly: If you chase it, it will elude you, but if you will sit down, turn your attention to other things, the butterfly may come and softly sit on your shoulder.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



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Words Of

Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1989

NUMBER 20

Swollen Expressions In Nehemiah



Bobby Duncan

The book of Nehemiah is an account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down when the Jews were carried away into Babylonian captivity. Nehemiah, who became the fearless leader of the Jews, seems to have been originally a butler to Artaxerxes, king of Persia. When he learned the wall of Jerusalem lay in ruins

he wept, and mourned, and fasted, and prayed (Neh. 1:4). But he didn't stop there; he took some action also. We often talk about situations that are bad, and sometimes pray and mourn about them, but how often do we set about to do something about those situations? Nehemiah was not reluctant to get involved in a very demanding work. What about you?

When Nehemiah, having obtained the help of the Persian king, went to Jerusalem and spoke to the people about the need to build the wall, he assured them of the help of God. When he had finished his speech, the people said: "Let us rise up and build" (2:18). With this, the job of rebuilding was half done. Half of nearly any job is determining to get started and get the job done. We often talk about plans to do certain things someday, but in many cases we never get around to carrying out those plans.

In connection with the building of the walls and the restoration of the practice of pure religion, there are a number of "swollen" expressions -- expressions that are so full of meaning they seem to want to burst open. Notice some of them.

"The God of heaven, he will prosper us" (2:20). This was in reply to those who laughed and scoffed at the idea that these weak Jews could accomplish what they had set out to accomplish. Nehemiah as much as admitted that the task was

impossible without the help of God, but he was confident God would be with them and they would be successful. Do we sometimes fail because we view every task from the standpoint of what we can do on our own, and never remember that God will prosper us as we do his will? We are doomed to failure if we are afraid to undertake anything we cannot finish by ourselves. "Our God shall fight for us," is a statement found in 4:20.

"The people had a mind to work" (4:6). The account indicates these were not the strongest or most talented people on earth, but they possessed something much more valuable than strength or talent; they had a mind to work. Think what God was able to do with them when they put their minds to the task of building the walls. Think what the same God can do with us if we will simply make up our minds to let him use us in his service. We must have a mind to work before he can use us.

"Half . . . wrought in the work, and the other half . . . held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the harbergeons" (4:16). The threat of enemy interference was so great that some had to stand guard while others did the actual building. Those who stood guard were doing a work just as important as that being done by the actual builders. Not everyone in the kingdom of God does the same work, but everyone should be doing something to contribute to the success of the effort. Your work may be behind the scenes and with no fanfare, but it is a part of the overall effort to build the church and to save lost souls.

"Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon" (4:17). In one hand there was a tool for building; in the other there was a weapon for destruction. It would have been so pleasant if they could have used both hands in building, but they could not afford to ignore the efforts of the enemy. Nehemiah had told the enemy: "Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem" (2:20). Some today have chosen not to fight the enemy at all, but rather to allow him to infiltrate the church, bringing in with him all kinds of false doctrines and immoral practices. To be positive in all our preach-

ing and teaching may be appealing, and it may attract many people and swell church rolls. But such is of no benefit if it fills the church with worldly and impenitent people who "have no portion, nor right, nor memorial" in spiritual Jerusalem.

After the wall was built, the time came when true religion was to be restored. "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man" (8:1). Wouldn't it be a marvelous thing if every member of the church could be depended on to be present for every gathering of the church? Ezra, the scribe, "read [in the book of the law] . . . from the morning until midday . . . and the ears of all the people were attentive" (8:3). When Ezra opened the book, "all the people stood up" (8:5) "They stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God" (9:3). Do you see in these statements an attitude toward God and his word which does not characterize God's people today? These people appreciated the fact they had been called back into the right way, "and there was very great gladness" (8:17). Do we appreciate having been shown the way of truth if we feel abused when the service lasts sixty-five minutes instead of sixty?

In Romans 15:4 we are reminded: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." How true this statement proves to be as we look at the book of Nehemiah!

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

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(USPS 691-760)

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-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Memorials



David Wade

As we approach Memorial Day it is fitting that we be reminded of the origin and purpose of memorials. Throughout the history of mankind memorials have had their place. Memorials not only perpetuate memory, but give understanding and meaning to the past, balance and perspective to the present, and direction and purpose for

the future. God passes over or cleanses our sins, "if we walk in the light" (I John 1:7).

The church at Corinth could not enjoy the spiritual blessings in Christ because they were tolerating sin. They were "puffed up" and "glorying" over a known fornicator who was in fellowship with them (I Corinthians 5:2, 6). Paul urged them "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened . . . Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (vs. 7-8). We are not fooling anyone but ourselves if we think we can tolerate such sins in the church and remain faithful to the Lord. To tolerate sins in ourselves or other church members is a clear indication that we have forgotten "Christ our passover."

Memorial Stones

When Joshua was ready to lead the Israelites across the Jordan to the Promised Land, God commanded that twelve men gather each a stone in the midst of the parted waters of Jordan (Joshua 4:5). The stones were set up in Gilgal (v. 20). The stones were to serve as a "sign among you." In later generations their children would ask, "What mean ye by these stones?" (v. 6). They were to answer, "That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever" (v. 7). Later in the chapter Joshua again rehearsed the meaning of the memorial, saying, "Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God forever" (vs. 22-24).

There have been many vain attempts to "explain away" the miraculous events of the Bible, even the crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan. These signs are recorded, not to cause disbelief, but, as Joshua said, that we "might know the hand of the Lord . . . is mighty," and we should "fear the Lord." Later, Joshua admonished them, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth" (Joshua 24:14).

Memorial Anointing

The account of the woman anointing the feet of Jesus in preparation for his burial is recorded in Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9; and John 12:1-9. John identifies the woman as Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and Judas Iscariot as the principal complainer about the "waste." Jesus rebuked his disciples for their misdirected concern. Then Jesus commended Mary for having "done what she could," saying, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be

The Domino Effect



Winfred Clark

Did you ever try to set up a long row of dominoes without tipping one over? Have you seen the effect when one fell against another? You will find all of these falling, from the first to the last. Don't we still see such things as that? I believe we do. I think you will find it in II Sam. 15.

It is here that Absalom created a problem in Israel. Let's just look at it for a moment.

1. There was created a CLIMATE OF SUSPICION

This was done by Absalom's standing at the gate of the city as men came to the king to resolve some controversy that they might have. Note that Absalom would appear to be on their side and at the same time throw suspicion on the king. He would say, "See, thy matters are good and right: but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee" (II Samuel 15:3). In so doing the person would have a doubt or question planted in his mind. But this was just as wrong as it could be.

2. This brings on the CURSE OF SEPARATION

By arousing suspicion and casting doubt upon David, you can see the "domino effect." It is not hard then for the people to leave David and begin to follow someone else. Some were caught up in the matter when they did not fully understand what was happening (II Samuel 15:11). "The conspiracy was strong, and the people increased continually after Absalom" (II Samuel 15:12). It is not hard to see how this separation came to pass, not after you see the climate for suspicion that was created. Such will always bring on the curse of separation. We

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the future.

Our annual Memorial Day, or Decoration Day, had its origin during the days of the Civil War to honor the war dead. This patriotic holiday has been broadened and extended to honor all members of America's armed forces who have given their lives for their country, whether in peace-time or war.

God has also established some very meaningful and important memorials through the centuries to help guide and direct his people. We shall reflect on a few of them and draw some lessons for our times.

Passover Memorial

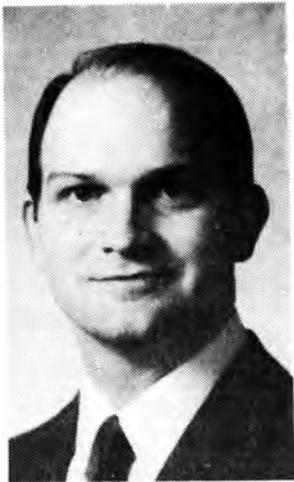
In Exodus 12 God revealed "the Lord's passover" to his people, the Israelites, who were ready to be delivered from Egyptian bondage. God gave them specific instructions for the passover observance, revealed what blessings would come from the feast, and also gave its meaning and purpose for future generations. "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations" (Exodus 12:12-14).

God urged his people to observe the feast and remain faithful to him. Anyone refusing to follow his instructions would be "cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15). As time transpired, and other feasts were instituted, God's people were known to observe the feasts while guilty of all manner of sins. As a result God hated and despised their feast days and solemn assemblies (Amos 5:21), and caused them to cease (Hosea 2:11). Not until Josiah's reform was idolatry eradicated and the passover restored (2 Kings 23:21).

This passover was a "shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). Paul states, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7). In Christ Jesus we have "all spiri-

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Preacher, When You Take The Stand, By All Means Take A Stand!



Dalton Key

Too many of us are becoming like the spineless preacher who confessed, "I have friends on both sides of the issue, and I stand squarely with my friends." Gospel preaching involves more than mere oratory and colorful illustration. The preaching of the gospel is not a

medium through which we say more and more about less and less. Our obligation to preach demands that we have something worthwhile to say, and that we say it. We would do well to trade some of our charisma for a bit more conviction.

Paul charged Timothy to "preach the word," not to "beat around the bush." (2 Timothy 4:2). Benjamin Franklin once described one of his acquaintances by announcing, "Here comes the orator, with his flood of words and his drop of reason." If we are not careful, we may be guilty of confusing words with wisdom, style with substance.

In commenting on a book he had finished reading, Abraham Lincoln remarked, "For people who like that kind of book, that is the kind of book they will like." This brings to mind Calvin Coolidge's dry observation: "When more and more people are thrown out of work, unemployment results." This sounds hauntingly similar to some of the speech-making-passed-off-as-preaching, which oozes from many of our pulpits today. We're hearing many lessons which are well constructed, cleverly developed, eloquently presented, yet which say absolutely nothing! Preaching which neither convinces nor convicts will never convert.

Perhaps we have spent too much time grazing in the locoweed of secular and denominational material, and too little time ingesting the milk and meat of God's word. Controversial topics are being swept under the rug of detente and replaced with matters agreed upon by all - saint and sinner alike. Preachers who are bold to speak out in favor of the family, mental health, or developing friendships (subjects upon which most everyone agrees) are too often timid and mealy-mouthed concerning the one church of the New Testament, marriage and divorce, social drinking, singing - and only singing - as music in Christian worship, and a host of other "touchy" concerns. It is disconcerting to hear many of the denominational pulpiteers taking a bolder, less compromising stand with regard to their dogmas than some of our preachers do with respect to the clear teachings of scripture.

Preacher friend, root yourself firmly in the truth of God's word. Take a firm stand with the inspired penmen of the New Testament. Never be afraid or

ashamed to preach truth - on any biblical theme. And dear elder, member, hearer - demand no less from the one who stands before you to preach.

Remember, souls are at stake!
--P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67905.

Memorials

Continued From Page 2

preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark 14:8-9).

Mary gave her gift, estimated at 300 pence in value and the equivalent of a year's ages. We, too, must give sacrificially as God has prospered us (I Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11). Also, we must not neglect the "cup of cold water (Matthew 10:42) knowing that, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love" (Hebrews 10:6).

Memorial Prayer And Alms

God commended Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, with the words, "Thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). Cornelius' fear of the Lord, coupled with his "much alms" and continual prayer ascended as a reminder to God, although God had not forgotten, that through the promise made to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Galatians 3:8-18) people from all nations could enjoy all spiritual blessings in Christ. Cornelius and his household received these blessings when they obeyed the command to be baptized (Acts 10:48). Later, when the Church at Jerusalem heard of their conversion, they "glorified God" because the Gentile's had been granted "repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

Memorial Supper

When Jesus instituted the supper, he said, "this

do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:24-25). The Lord's supper is a 2000 year old memorial to the sacrifice of the perfect Lamb for the sins of the world. The Lord's supper is not like the memorial stones long since scattered and ground into powder, or the container of expensive perfume long since evaporated into the air. Jesus chose a fitting memorial of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine to represent his body and blood sacrificed for atonement. The emblems are also noted for their universality, availability, and portability. The supper is to be observed on "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7), "till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26).

The Lord's supper looks three directions. It is a memorial to the suffering at Calvary. Paul states that the supper is a communion, that is, fellowship, of the "body" and "blood" of Christ (I Corinthians 10:16-17). Furthermore, Paul states the future hope as we "proclaim the Lord's death til he comes" (11:26). We should ever count it an exalted privilege to be faithful to our calling and partake of the supper in a worthy manner (11:27).

Memorials are important to us. Memorials perpetuate memory, give understanding and meaning to the past, balance and perspective to the present, and direction and purpose to the future.

My Case For Total Abstinence

Bob Plunket

1. Because we are told to "Shun the very appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). Nothing is more associated with evil than alcohol.
2. Because we are urged about eighteen times to be sober. Paul says, "Let us watch and be sober" (I Thessalonians 5:6). I was blessed with sober parents. I want to be one. When I get up in the morning I want to know what I did the night before.
3. Because of what it is. It is a narcotic mind-altering, depressant drug, toxic in nature.
4. Because of what it has done. Just look at the history of this drug.
5. Because of what it is doing today - the broken homes, the battered wives, the abused children, the carnage on the highways, crime, etc.
6. Because there are no safe levels. As little as .03 can alter judgment and begin to destroy brain cells. You do not have to be drunk.
7. Because one in ten will be a problem drinker or

an alcoholic. It is an addictive drug. You or I could be that one.

8. Because of my influence. I could cause a weak brother or one of my children to become an alcoholic. Remember Paul said, "If eating meat..."

9. Because it offers absolutely no help in a Christian's goals for life. It takes but it gives nothing.

10. Because of its costs. A moderate addiction cost \$50,000 in a lifetime. Think of the good things you could do with this.

11. Because it is a deceptive drug. It makes one feel good when he is bad. It makes one feel wise when he is foolish. It makes one feel strong when he is weak. It makes one feel rich when he is poor. It makes one feel safe when he is in grave danger.

12. Because it is the most anti-social drug. People talk about social drinking when alcohol causes

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On Sowing And Reaping



Cecil May, Jr.

The law of sowing and reaping is woven into the warp and woof of the universe. It is the way things work, both physically and spiritually.

We reap what we sow. One cannot sow briars and reap grapes. The fig tree does not bear olive berries (James 3:12). One cannot sow a life of dishonor, dissipation and depravity

and reap health and happiness. Sowing strife and hatred does not bring a harvest of unity and peace. Many sow wild oats and pray for a crop failure, but harvest time comes. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

We reap later than we sow. The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it (James 5:7). Delay of harvest creates a false sense of security in evildoers who think they have fooled God after all. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The unbelieving farmer who boasted that his crops were as abundant and full as his believing church-going neighbor was rightly reminded, "God doesn't settle all of his accounts in October." So, also, believers are exhorted, "And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

We reap more than we sow. There would be precious little farming done if, after all the work and expense of planting, cultivating, fertilizing and spraying, the planter expected to receive just grain for grain or bean for bean. The evil we sow comes back in greater abundance than we have strown it.

My Case For Total Abstinence

Continued From Page 3

cursing and fighting and killing.

13. I am dubious of any drink that you can't drink until you are twenty-one. You can't drink it and drive. You can't drink it and go to work. You shouldn't drink it and go home.

14. Because I want to live as long and be as alert as I can. Drinking alcohol regularly can take ten to twelve years off of one's life.

15. Because alcohol can cause disease in the liver, kidneys, stomach, heart and the brain. It can cause serious birth defects.

16. Because of these reasons alcohol will surely keep one from heaven. Then one would have to spend eternity in a city of drunks. The wise man knew when he said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

--110 E. 4th St. Tusculumbia, AL 35674.

"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7). So, also, when we give, it is given back to us in "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over" (Luke 10:38). "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Corinthians 9:6).

A boy who was mad at his girlfriend's father vengefully sowed Johnson grass in one of his cultivated fields. The father later came to accept his

daughter's choice, and gave her and her husband-to-be a wedding present - the same field in which the boy had sowed the weeds. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Do not sow carelessly or without thought. What you are sowing now you will meet again at harvest, with interest compounded.

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

When Do We Start?

Paul Smith

When do we start and how do we go about this matter of church growth? This is the question that bothers a lot of us. A correct but insufficient answer would be something like this: We begin now and follow God's arrangement. You can't beat that for accuracy, but a lot of us have trouble following it. Consider the following:

Professor Shinichi Suzuki is reported to be outstanding in his work with children. He trains Japanese children to be skilled musicians by the age of 6 or 7. His process is simple:

(1) Until the age of two he has the parents play classical music for their babies.

(2) At two he starts a series of music lessons for the mother, with the two year old as observer.

(3) Then he gives each child a miniature violin so the child can get the feel of the instrument.

(4) Lessons begin with short periods of two or three minutes.

(5) They build up until they can concentrate for at least one hour.

Recently he gave a concert with 1,500 children

playing the classics of Chopin, Beethoven, etc. The average age of the child was seven. By the time the child was old enough to learn that the violin is a difficult instrument to play, he has already mastered it! This great teacher uses five basic steps: . . . (1) Exposure, (2) Imitation, (3) Encouragement, (4) Repetition, (5) Refinement.

What a tremendous lesson. Do we want to know when to start and how to proceed in the matter of church growth? God grant that the time is near when parents in every home will follow this procedure in teaching their children the Bible. Then by the time they learn that Christianity is not an easy thing to follow, they will have already adequately prepared to face the issues.

God grant that the day is near when the body of Christ, the church, will follow the same procedure in training every "babe in Christ," every new child of God! Church growth results from a learning process that begins at birth. This has always been God's way. We can't beat it, so let's follow it. Then we will begin some real growth.

--Denver, Colorado.

The Domino Effect

Continued From Page 2

have surely seen it in our day.

3. This becomes the CAUSE FOR SUFFERING

Notice carefully the description given in II Samuel 15:23. "And all the country wept with a loud voice, and the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the

wilderness." What a sad thing! What suffering! What heartache! What division! But here you are seeing the "domino effect."

This ought to cause men to stop and think before they seek to create a CLIMATE FOR SUSPICION. After all, that thing will have a "domino effect!"

--P.O. Box 506 Athens, AL 35611.

"Deliver Us From Evil" Fact Or Fiction?

Ron Stough

Perhaps you read about the dramatic conclusion reached by the Jesus Seminar in Atlanta a few weeks ago. It was the consensus of this learned group of scholars that Jesus probably never said the prayer often referred to as the "Lord's Prayer," found in Matthew and Luke. The group agreed that Jesus probably didn't ask God to "deliver us from evil," and almost certainly never said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

Unfortunately, such an attitude toward the Word of God is not all that uncommon in the religious world. Many who claim to believe in God and his word have no hesitation about disregarding or disclaiming various passages found in the Bible.

The Christian's view of the Bible, however, must be that it is the inspired, infallible, inerrant, all-sufficient, completely and totally authoritative

Word of God. One reason for this belief is that the Bible, itself, makes this claim. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 states, "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." The Bible contains many predictive prophecies, prophecies that told of events that came to pass many years and even centuries after the prophecies were given (Isaiah 13:17-33; Ezekiel 26:3-14).

The Bible is the one book that shows us the way from earth to heaven. It is the book that reveals to us the mind and heart of our great and loving God. We can read and study it with full and complete trust in its inspiration, authority, and accuracy, despite what councils of men may decide.

--Duncan, OK, Via Old Paths.



Words Of Truth

"I am not ma
Words of Truth"

(USPS 691-760)

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 1989

NUMBER 21

The Matamoros Monstrosity

David Miller

People across America were shocked and appalled by the realization of an active satanic cult just across our southern border. Viewers were sickened as they watched with horror the recovery of mutilated bodies and buckets of human brains and entrails. With astonishment, we heard the devotee claims that the slow torture and blood-letting of human sacrifice strengthens the soul of the cult member and secures protection from his enemies (i.e., the police).

Nothing surprises us any more. We have been conditioned to expect the worst. No matter how bizarre, immoral, sick, or decadent, someone somewhere will do it. But the most disconcerting thing about this predictable pluralistic maze is that God's word long ago anticipated the depths to which any society of people will plunge, once those people sever themselves from biblical Moorings.

The moral framework depicted in the Bible, when embraced by the majority of the people of any given society, enables that society to achieve a measure of stability (Psalm 33:12; Isaiah 60:12). Once that society begins to abandon its heavenward gaze and overturn its moral foundations, it's just a matter of time before that society comes apart at the seams and destroys itself. Every nation upon the face of the earth throughout human history has followed this inevitable course.

Once that society begins to abandon its heavenward gaze and overturn its moral foundations, it's just a matter of time before that society comes apart at the seams and destroys itself.

Widespread moral and religious reorientation has been underway in our country at least since the sixties. A deluge of efforts have been made to eradicate a monotheistic mind-set from the American consciousness. In its place, a conception of reality has been promoted which allows for the

sanctioning of virtually any and every belief and practice, no matter how deviant from previous moral consensus.

We should have anticipated the horrifying spectacle at Matamoros. The sixties reintroduced us to astrology and witchcraft. The movie "The Exorcist" was simply the first in a flood of flicks that enhance our toleration of and desensitize our opposition to the occult and satanic worship ritual. Checking one's horoscope has become a commonplace practice among many Americans. The satanists were simply taking astrology and belief in demons to their logical conclusion.

As with so many other facets of our crumbling moral infrastructure, the time is clearly NOW for believers in God and the Bible to announce to our generation God's view of reality. We need to publicize through word-of-mouth and every form of media God's attitude regarding satanism, spiritualism, witchcraft, sorcery, voodoo, astrology, and black magic. We need to tell people what God told the Jews as they were about to enter into Canaan:

"There shall not be found among you anyone who

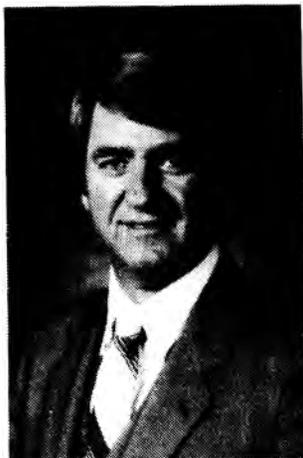
makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12 -- NASB).

We need to declare to people the reality of God, the reality of His will, and the reality of eternal punishment for those who reject His will. We need to expose people to the truth that those who engage in sorcerous practices will one day be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8; cf., Galatians 5:20).

We have nothing to lose when we make every effort to make known God's feelings about reality. We have everything to lose if we sit idly by and allow the humanists and false religionists to interpret the tragic events of our day. Let us speak God's words, that some may listen and be saved.

P.O. Box 210667, Bedford, TX.

The Battle Of The Church Budget



Glenn A. Posey

the church in the upcoming year, and how much money it will take to carry out those plans. This

Raising money in the church has always been a painstaking process. A church budget is functional and operational in carrying out the purpose of a congregation in its work in doing good.

Generally, the preacher(s), elders, and deacons get together once a year and discuss plans for

plan (budget) is then presented to the whole congregation for its consideration.

The little congregation where I grew up had a budget, but didn't know it. We had Sunday morning services, only. During the summer we had a gospel meeting or two. However, we took up money every Sunday. One of the good old brothers would put the collection in a Country Gentlemen tobacco sack, take it home and put it between the bed mattresses. That money paid the bills. We had a budget. When we needed more money that old brother would make a speech, then the hat was passed, and we gave. We had a budget alright.

How times have changed. But God's Word still says; save the lost (Mark 16:15), edify the church

Continued On Page 3

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

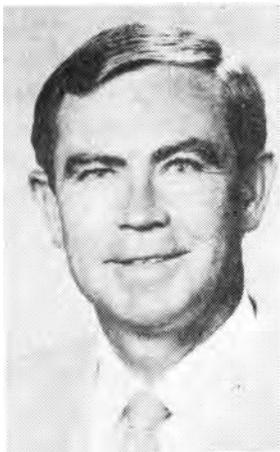
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Does "Baptism For The Remission Of Sins" Always Save?



Weldon Langfield

A distinctive plea of the churches of Christ is that one must be baptized for the remission, or forgiveness, of sins in order to be saved. That this position is in exact accord with the Bible cannot be denied. On the birthday of the Lord's church, Peter preached, "Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Immersion is "unto," or "into" the forgiveness of sins -- this definition of the Greek word "eis" is undeniable. If one were to have an honest doubt about the meaning of Acts 2:38, it would quickly be vanquished upon examination of other passages which, with equal clarity, insist that baptism is the spiritual line of demarcation at which God dispenses the blessings of pardon and sanctification (Romans 6:3-4, Acts 22:16, Galatians 3:26-27, I Peter 3:20-21, et. al.). Why then is the question raised which constitutes the title of this article? Because sometimes what may appear to be "baptism for the remission of sins" may not remit sins at all. Does "baptism for the remission of sins" always save?

Not when one is improperly taught. A phrase

Continued On Page 4

The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Whatever Happened To "The Last Temptation Of Christ"



David Wade

A few months ago, a flurry of protests arose over the release of the film, "The Last Temptation of Christ." Christians and other concerned citizens were mobilized in protest against this scurrilous attack on the life and character of Jesus Christ. As a result, most of the theaters have refused to book the film. Only about 1% of the theaters across America have shown the film, according to Donald Wildmon, executive director of the Tupelo, MS based American Family Association. Wildmon and his organization have been the principal organizers of the boycott against the film. Wildmon states in his November/December 1988 AFA Journal that, "Thus far MCA/Universal has been able to recoup only about \$5,000,000 of their \$17,000,000 investment."

The February 1989 AFA Journal states that MCA/Universal plans to re-release the movie for theaters and also release the movie to the home video market. We called some of the video rental stores in our area, and they reported that they have no plans to purchase the movie when it becomes available. You would do well to call or write the video markets in your area and state your objections to the film. (By the way, if you have been in a video rental store lately, you have probably noticed a lot of other things that Christians ought to speak out against.)

Someone may ask, "Why such an uproar over the film?" As described in the aforementioned journal: "The movie presents Jesus as a tormented, confused sinner who cannot tell if it is the devil or God who speaks to Him, who commits adultery, who is a liar, and who dies for His own sins. It presents Christianity as a religion Paul invented. In the movie, Judas is depicted as a man of strength and integrity. There is no resurrection. The movie ends with Jesus dying on the cross, thrilled that He had managed to get Himself crucified."

What a travesty! It is so far removed from the true Jesus who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). The author later declares, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled,

separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). Peter declares, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Peter 2:21-22). To this, John adds, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin" (I John 3:5).

Paul Harvey recently wrote concerning the movie: "Until now I have said nothing about the motion picture 'The Last Temptation of Christ' because I did want to contribute to focusing more attention on this purposeful historic distortion. But something Charles Colson wrote the other day motivates me to echo his indignation. 'The media fan public indignation into outrage when baseball's Al Campanis makes a public statement about blacks which they consider offensive. Jimmy the Greek is fired by CBS for the same reason. When Black Sambo manikins appear as far away as a Tokyo department store, there is a vehement protest in our Congress. Yet Hollywood makes a movie which amounts to a scurrilous attack on the character of Jesus Christ and defends this defamatory drama in the name of 'freedom of speech.' Colson suspects that Hollywood gurus would faint dead away if a similar movie were made about Martin Luther King or Ghandi or John Lennon. He calls it 'selective tolerance.' Every group in America seems to be protected by written and unwritten law -- from Hare Krishnas to Satanists. But Christian-bashing is not only permitted -- but applauded -- in the name of 'artistic liberty.' Christians, meanwhile, are parodied, caricatured and lampooned without recourse."

Don Feder, a syndicated columnist wrote, "Christians are the only group Hollywood can offend with impunity, the only creed it actually goes out of its way to insult. Clerics, from fundamentalist preachers to Catholic monks, are routinely represented as hypocrites, hucksters, sadists, and lechers. The tenets of Christianity are regularly held up to ridicule."

We should not be surprised, or even perplexed that the unbelieving world loves to make sport of religious hypocrites, hucksters, sadists, and lechers, even of such who claim to be members of the Lord's church. I suppose they are receiving a part of their just dues.

But when MCA/Universal attacked the character and divinity of Christ, they are taken to the

Continued On Page 3

Needed: Leaders With Vision



Cecil May, Jr.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Prov. 29:18).

This text is often used to point out the need for great plans, big dreams, and challenging goals. We rarely hit higher than we aim. It is better to try for a great goal, even if we miss it somewhat, than to aim at nothing and achieve it. This kind of "vision" gives a group oneness, lends excitement and a sense of being needed.

While this is important, however, it is not what this text is saying. "Vision," here, is revelation from God, through the law, the prophets, or the inspired wise men. "Where there is no word from the Lord, the people are left to perish without direction," is the warning of the wise man in this verse, a truth amply illustrated in the days of the judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (see Judges 19-21).

"Vision," here, is revelation from God, through the law, the prophets, or the inspired wise men.

Note the poetic structure of this proverb. The first part states the truth negatively; the second part states the same truth positively. This is called "antithetic" (because the two parts are stated in opposite, positive/negative terms) "parallelism" (because the same truth is stated in both parts). Many of the proverbs have this structure, including several in this same chapter. "Where there is no vision" is opposite in meaning to "he that keepeth the law." "Vision" and "law" are parallel.

Commentators and translators agree, almost unanimously. Franz Delitzsch in his monumental Old Testament Commentary renders, "Without a revelation . . ." Translations read, "Where there is no prophecy. . ." (RSV) and, "Where there is no revelation . . ." (NIV). The Berkeley and NAS Versions both render, "where there is no vision," but each gives "revelation" or "prophetic vision" in footnote or margin.

The first lesson, frequently derived from the first verse, is needed, but the lesson the prophet intended to teach is needed even more. Our first

need is not great plans, but specific direction from God's word. It is more important that our plans be

righteous than that they be stupendous.

Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

I Am A Visitor

I am a visitor, and sometimes I see things you church members don't notice. I can appreciate things you take for granted -- and be repulsed by things you have learned to accept. Your building may be beautiful, your sermon inspiring, and your church perfectly aligned with the Bible -- but most of the time it's not these things, but the little things I notice.

When I walk in the door, I feel like a stranger -- for that is what I am. So it means a lot when someone welcomes me with a friendly greeting. I don't mean just the preacher or an elder, but one of the "regular" members. It's nice when they want to know my name, and even better when they want to know ME. They try to help me feel at ease. They show me where my Bible class meets. They introduce me to someone in my class. I make two new friends.

I like Bible classes where there is love, excitement, and participation, where the people seem glad to be there. I like it when they introduce me as a visitor, when someone asks me to sit next to them, and when a person I've never met helps me find I Cor. 13 in my Bible. The class members are anxious to discuss the lesson to see how it applies to their everyday lives; and they talk about God in language I can understand. I'm not used to that in my old church. I leave class with some new understandings and some things I need to think about.

Someone from the class invites me to sit with him in the worship service. When the singing starts, I notice there is no organ, but it sounds beautiful anyway. My friend next to me is not a fantastic singer, but he sings enthusiastically -- like he means what the song is saying. Everyone is participating and the people seem to be enjoying church. I am not used to that, but it makes me feel good, too.

When the preacher starts talking, it impresses me that people all start reaching for Bibles and note pads. They follow along in the Bible and seem to be really interested in what is being said; so I listen, too.

After worship I usually figure it's time to head home to my paper and TV. But all the people around me make an effort to meet and welcome me. They invite me to come back to visit again -- they invite me home for Sunday dinner. They want to get to know me better. All of them seem to know and love each other, and I have a hard time getting through the crowd; so I stay and talk and meet more people. The TV and paper can wait.

When I get back home again, I often forget what

the building looked like, or even what the sermon was about. But I remember where I met people who loved God and each other -- people who loved ME. I want to come back so I can find out what makes them that way.

--Author unknown, via Brown Trail "Waymarks", May 1989.

The Battle Of The Church Budget

Continued From Page 1

(Ephesians 4:12), and relieve the needy (Matthew 25:31-46). Now, it takes money for a local congregation to carry on.

Does the average member of the local congregation realize just how important his/her weekly contribution is to the success of its Planned Program of Progress? Maybe so, maybe no.

I learned a vital lesson about giving years ago. My father used to say, a hen ought to lay where she eats. A Christian ought to give weekly where he is a member.

I learned a vital lesson about giving years ago. My father used to say, a hen ought to lay where she eats.

The battle of the church budget goes on.
--P.O. Box 297, Cullman, Alabama.

**A Gift
Suggestion:
Give A Friend
Words Of Truth
For A Year!**

Whatever Happened To "The Last Temptation Of Christ"

Continued From Page 2

proverbial "woodshed." Not only is the film a financial disaster for them, it has suffered further embarrassment and disgrace in the March 29 Academy Awards. The only nomination for the

film was in the Best Director category in which it lost out to "Rain Man."

Maybe this lesson will serve warning to the movie and T.V. moguls, financiers, directors,

actors, etc., who would dare to make sport of the Son of God. -- NO MORE.

Does "Baptism For The Remission Of Sins" Always Save?

Continued From Page 2

that we don't hear often enough these days is, "You can't be taught wrong and baptized right." Those words are absolutely true. While the Bible teaches that baptism "doth now save you" (I Peter 3:21), it nowhere teaches that baptism alone saves. Scriptural immersion is the last of five steps, all of which are vital to being saved. First, one must hear the word of God (Romans 10:17). Then he must believe the divine message (Romans 10:11). Next, the sinner must repent of his sins (Acts 3:19). The fourth step in God's plan of salvation is the confessing of Christ's name before men (Romans 10:10). Only after completing these steps can one actually be baptized for the remission of sins.

Occasionally, there are those who claim to have been baptized in a denomination, particularly the Baptist church, for forgiveness of sins and who want to simply "place membership" without "rebaptism." It is this writer's experience that such claims are seldom accurate. Baptists in particular, and denominationalists in general, do not baptize for the remission of sins. When denominations do immerse, that immersion is almost always seen as a rite necessary to join that particular church and is not even considered essential to salvation. But let's assume that one correctly insists that at the time he was baptized into the Baptist church, the preacher said it was for the remission of sins. The baptism would still not be scriptural. Why? Because all Baptist churches teach the Calvin-influenced view that an emotional experience totally unrelated to baptism is what makes one a Christian, i.e., what saves. When one is baptized, then, he is already viewed as being "saved."

Even if a "maverick" Baptist preacher (and that's what he'd be) said that he was baptizing "for the remission of sins" at the time of a baptism, he would be contradicting himself. One baptized in such a manner would enter the water thinking he'd already been saved and would thereby "be taught wrong and baptized right." Therefore, such a baptism could not save.

Not when one has been baptized in a cult. Interestingly, some cults baptize, or so they say, for the remission of sins. The Mormons are a prime example of this. "Latter Day Saints" claim to immerse for the remission of sins. Yet while the Bible teaches that we must hear the word of God in order to develop saving faith, Mormon converts hear and develop faith in the *Book of Mormon*. The important thing to believe is not that Christ is the Son of God, but that Joseph Smith was God's "prophet." Therefore, Mormon baptisms do not remit sins, as they are not preceded by scriptural faith. Because Jesus Christ and the scriptures are neglected and/or maligned by every cult in their efforts to make converts, saving faith cannot be developed from the teaching of a cult. Scriptural baptism is thus impossible in one of these bodies regardless of its alleged purpose.

Not when one doesn't repent. Baptism is presented in the Bible as a critical step in the plan of salvation. Some passages, taken out of context, may be misunderstood to mean that baptism is of such overriding importance that the other steps pale in comparison. Consider, for example, Romans 6:3-4 which says, "Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We are buried therefore with him through baptism into death: That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Here the Bible portrays burial in the watery grave as immediately preceding "newness of life."

Because baptism for the remission of sins is the final step in God's plan, it is the line of demarcation separating man from God. Yet it is no more essential than the other steps. To illustrate, in order to withdraw money from the bank, it might be said that a depositor must present his passbook to the teller. While that is absolutely true, there are other steps which must be taken in order to affect a bank transaction. One must get into his car, drive to the bank and wait in line in order to transact business with a financial institution. If any of those steps are missing, no banking can be done. Likewise, unless one hears, believes, repents, confesses *and* is baptized, he simply cannot "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

There are some who are teaching that baptism is efficacious without repentance. It is felt by those of this class that one may maintain sinful relationships from his pre-Christian life and be right with God. This is seen most vividly among those who teach that baptism will make an adulterous union acceptable to God. Christian baptism, however, only remits sins that have been repented of; to teach otherwise is to give this act a power the Bible doesn't give it. Additionally, some are apparently so desirous of numerical growth that they baptize people who show every indication of wanting to remain in their worldly ways. The Bible says one must "bring forth . . . fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

Still others teach that one may be baptized for remission of sins without much hearing. Candidates for baptism may hear about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, but nothing about his bride, the church. The subjects of false teaching, instrumental music and denominationalism are carefully avoided. This approach is neither fair nor honest. In a world filled with hundreds of competing religious bodies everyone who obeys the gospel has the right to know exactly what the Bible teaches on these subjects.

Granted, modern denominations did not exist in New Testament times. John the Baptist, however, condemned its ancient counterpart, Jewish

religious parties. In Luke 3:7 we read, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Christ likewise called them by name, saying "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). Other examples could be cited. The point is clear -- inspired speakers in Bible times were not "bashful" about drawing a clear line between good and evil, between man-made and God-made religion, and we must not be either. For potential converts, that is part of hearing the word.

Conclusion. Satan is a master counterfeiter. He himself can closely counterfeit "an angel of light," and his preachers, "ministers of righteousness" (II Corinthians 11:14-15). He even counterfeits the true people of God (Revelation 2:9). It should come as no surprise that the devil has also counterfeited baptism for the remission of sins. Let us always be careful to present the plan of salvation fully and completely to those around us, and exhort all accountable people to fully "obey . . . the gospel" (II Thessalonians 1:8).

Satan is a master counterfeiter. He himself can closely counterfeit "an angel of light," and his preachers, "ministers of righteousness" (II Corinthians 11:14-15).

--2913 Brock Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306.

-Exercise-

Do you sometimes feel "dog tired" at the end of your work day?

Maybe you're burning up more "calories" than you think you are. These are ways you exercise, and the number of calories per hour consumed:

Beating around the bush	75
Jogging the memory	125
Jumping to conclusions	100
Climbing the wall	150
Swallowing pride	50
Turning the other cheek	75
Wading through paperwork	300
Dragging your heels	100
Passing the buck	25
(this ought to be more)	
Grasping at straws	75
Beating your own drum	100
Throwing your weight around	300
Eating crow	200
Pushing your luck	250

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 1989

NUMBER 22

In Memoriam A. C. McGlaun

March 6, 1903 - April 14, 1989



The Childhaven board, staff, and children have suffered a great loss in the death of Brother A. C. McGlaun of Jasper, Alabama on April 14, 1989.

Brother McGlaun was an avid supporter of Childhaven. He served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for 15 years, effecting changes which carry over to the present time. He was a true friend of children.

Brother McGlaun was raised on a farm near Marietta, Mississippi as the fifth child in a family of nine. He moved to Birmingham in 1925 to work as a clerk. Then in December 1926 he married Lois Keeton and moved to Red Bay, Alabama to work in the hardware business with his father-in-law. Finally in November 1929 he and Lois moved to Jasper, Alabama where he went into the hardware business with his brother-in-law.

He served as alderman on the Jasper City Council, President of the Alabama Retail Hardware Association, and President of the Alabama Retail Merchants Association. As a member of the Jasper Lions Club for more than 30 years, he has served as Club President and Deputy District Governor.

Brother McGlaun was a faithful member and elder of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. His tireless efforts of serving the Lord, both as a faithful member of the church and supporter of efforts to help the children here at Childhaven, will long be remembered. We all feel his absence.

--Via -- Childhaven News March-April 1989.

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Before You Pronounce Us Dead



Dalton Key

A few years back, a small-town newspaper reporter gave an unusual excuse for his abbreviated, barely-there story. He explained, "First, nothing happened. And second, what did happen to people who don't happen to want everybody to know what happened."

There are always those within a congregation quick to point an accusing finger at the lifelessness of the church, where, as they may say, "Nothing is happening!" Yet beneath the congregational crust, in the day-to-day lives of sincere, consecrated members, a great deal is happening! The church's hardest workers are usually those least inclined to publicize their own good works. Because of their Christlike humility, they don't "happen to want everybody to know what happened."

Those murmurers who criticize the local body being dead and lifeless are too often failing to see the true picture. They fail to see the godly couple who for years have taken food to an elderly sister. They don't know about the good members who regularly visit the nursing homes and hospitals. The critics haven't heard of the white-haired couple who spend long evenings, often into the wee hours of the morning, teaching an eager neighbor the gospel of Christ.

Those murmurers who criticize the local body for being dead and lifeless are too often failing to see the true picture.

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

NBC's "Roe vs. Wade"



David Wade

Perhaps many of you viewed the NBC Monday night movie, "Roe vs. Wade," which was aired nationwide May 15. It is the story of the Texas drifter whose unwanted pregnancy led to the 1973 Supreme Court abortion ruling.

Although NBC and some film critics hailed the film as a fair and unbiased presentation of both sides of the abortion issue, the movie

portrayed a very pronounced pro-abortion bias. For instance, the pro-abortion lawyers who brought the case to the Supreme Court appeared suave and well armed with "air-tight" arguments. On the other hand, the anti-abortion lawyers were portrayed as beer drinking buffoons who did not know how to argue the case and were not sure if the unborn child possessed a soul. Furthermore, soft background music was dubbed on certain scenes in an obvious effort to soften the impact of gripping statements which deny the humanity of the unborn, and to evoke sympathy from the viewers toward Jane Roe.

It is impossible for this writer to feel sympathy for Jane Roe, who, according to the movie version, lied and said, "I was raped," and later told the truth, "I was never raped." According to the movie, the desired abortion, which she never received, was merely a matter of convenience, "I can't think about keeping this baby, and I can't think about giving it away. I'm caught between a rock and a hard place."

At least, we can appreciate the script writers for permitting actress Holly Hunter to refer to the unborn child as "baby." Pro-abortion advocates often use such terms as "fetus," "fetal tissue," "glob of protoplasm," "feto-placental unit," and other high sounding phrases which serve as a direct denial of the humanity of the growing child.

Interestingly, the timing of the NBC movie coincides with the latest challenge of Roe vs. Wade. And with the Reagan appointees, Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony M. Kennedy, on the high court, the momentum appears to have moved in the other direction. From the original 1973 vote of 7-2, the Justices' last ruling in 1986, reaffirmed Roe vs. Wade by a vote of 5-4.

On April 26, 1989, the court heard the case, Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services, which again challenges Roe vs. Wade. The Justices' response to that case has yet to be rendered.

Meanwhile, in Anthony M. Kennedy's first abortion ruling from the high court, given Tuesday, May 16, the day after the NBC movie aired, he decided in favor of Florida's 1988 parental consent law. Any elation by pro-life advocates was short-lived, as the next day, May 17, the justices, without

comment or any recorded dissenting vote, set aside the order issued by Kennedy the previous day. This cleared the way for a 15 year old Florida girl to have an abortion without parental consent.

It should be a clear sign that something bad has gone wrong in our society that requires a minor to have parental consent to have her ears pierced, but will grant the same minor an abortion without parental consent. Our Federal laws protect the snail darters and the bald eagle and her eggs, but the unborn child in the mother's womb is "fair game" for anyone who wishes to destroy it.

Think of the enormity of the problem. Over 25,000,000 babies have been "legally" aborted in the United States since 1973. Do you realize that is over 1/10 of our present population? Legal abortion is America's holocaust!

The Bible plainly teaches that the shedding of innocent blood eventually brings God's judgment. Cain first discovered this truth. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Innocent blood cries for vengeance (Revelation 6:9-11). Hands that shed innocent blood are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 6:16-17). The physician who performs social abortions for financial gain is under severe judgment. "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person" (Deuteronomy 27:25). Who could be more innocent than the unborn child?

Will God permit our nation to go unpunished for the immoral evil of abortion? "The mills of God grind slowly but surely," and judgment is surely coming. Ezekiel provides us a vision of God's judgment against Judah. "The land is full of blood and the city full of perverseness," charged the Lord (Ezekiel 9:9). A man with a writer's inkhorn was summoned to "go through the city . . . and set a mark upon the foreheads of all the men who sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (v. 4). Those who sighed and cried over the abominations of Judah were spared judgment. The guilty and complacent were slain (vs. 5, 6).

We must sigh and cry over the abominations of our nation. Although we may not be directly involved in the abortion scourge, we indirectly lend our support to it by remaining silent and complacent. We must lift up our voices and be heard. We must actively pursue every legal and peaceful avenue open to us to save the unborn, ourselves, and our nation.

**A Gift
Suggestion:
Subscribe To
Words Of Truth
For A Friend!**

"I Will Not Forget . . ."



W. A. Holley

How often we forget what we should remember! Many have forgotten their duty toward God and toward his family. To say, "I will not forget" expresses resolve, determination, will. No one can accomplish anything unless there is determination to do so.

There are things which we SHOULD forget. The apostle

Paul, wrote about "forgetting those things which are behind. . ." (Philippians 3:13-14). It is well for one to forget about past failures, past insults, even past accomplishments -- and not permit such to hinder future progress.

(1) "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" (Psalm 119:16). We may well forget the doctrines and commandments of men; but we must not forget the word of God (Matthew 15:1-9; Hebrews 4:12). The word of God must be obeyed if one wishes to be saved (Hebrews 5:8-9; Revelation 22:14).

(2) "For I am become like a wine-skin in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes" (Psalm 119:83, A.S.V.). "Statutes" refers to any law which God has caused to be permanent. The Law of Moses was permanent for as long as it was in effect; but it was fulfilled by Jesus Christ, and was taken out of the way when Jesus died upon the cruel cross (Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-49; Colossians 2:14-17).

We are saved by the word of God when we believe and obey it (Acts 2:36-38; Matthew 4:4; James 1:18-21). All responsible people are under the power and authority of the New Testament (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

(3) "My soul is continually in thy hand: yet do I not forget thy law" (Psalm 119:109). The New Testament is now the law of God (Romans 8:1-2; James 1:25; cf. 2:12). To argue that Christians are not under any "law" is folly indeed! Law implies imposition by a sovereign authority, plus the obligation of obedience on the part of all subjects to that authority. God who made man has a right to command him (Acts 5:29; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

The conditions of salvation as set forth in God's

Before You Pronounce Us Dead

Continued From Page 2

No, these and scores of other good works go on right under our very noses. But we want something more sensational, more expensive, more publicized.

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42).

Christian brother or sister, before you sit in the critic's chair, before you pronounce the local church dead, look a bit deeper. You may be diagnosing no one but yourself!

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holy word are: Faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Luke 13:3, 5), confession of Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32-33), and baptism for (or unto), the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

(4) "I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts" (Psalm 119:141). The writer of this verse was not an ego maniac; rather, he was humble enough to remember, and to obey, the precepts of God.

It is not enough to be a "nominal" Christian; rather, one must be a genuine Christian -- one who has obeyed from the heart God's holy will (Romans 6:3-4, 17-18; Matthew 5:16; Titus 2:11-12; James 1:26-27), and one who is determined to remain unfaithful unto God unto death.

(5) "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments" (Psalm 119:176). When a child of God goes astray, he can always return if he remembers God and his word. Is it possible for a child of God to so sin as to be eternally lost? Indeed, it is! (Galatians 5:4; I Corinthians 9:27; 10:12; Luke 8:13; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:25-30).

Even sheep can be lost; and if not rescued, they perish (Matthew 10:6; Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 15:24). The old Calvinistic doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace," is not taught in your Bible (I Chronicles 28:9; II Chronicles 15:2).

(6) "Bless the lord, O my soul: and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2). The Lord God has blessed us wonderfully. The seasons of the year (Genesis 8:22); our food, clothing, and shelter represent God's physical benefits extended to us. We sing:

"Count your blessings,
name them one by one,
Count your many blessings,
see what God has done."

One dear brother, when asked to lead a prayer, would always say, "We thank thee for life."

This brother is now gone; but I now understand better what he had in mind.

We shall permit the scripture to speak: "We" (Paul and Barnabas) "also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:14-17).

God is the creator of all things in heaven and in earth. God does not dwell in temples made with hands. He does not need anything men can provide; he is the source of life. In him we live, and move, and have our being. The goodness of God manifested in the creation of heaven and earth should help men to understand there must have been a Maker -- A First Cause (Hebrews 3:4-6). Something never comes from nothing. All life comes from antecedent life. A watch, or an automobile, testifies that it had a designer and maker. We suggest that Acts 17:22-29, be carefully read.

The goodness of God manifested in the creation of heaven and earth should help me to understand there must have been a Maker -- A First Cause.

(7) We should not forget those promises we made to God our Father. When you made the good confession, and were baptized into Christ, you promised him your all for the remainder of your life.

When you married your spouse, your promised before God and man you would be true and faithful to your companion for as long as you both should live. Do not forget that promise.

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Preachers And Churches

Part 1 -- Reactions to God's Messengers

From the earliest recorded history of God's use of men to declare His will to the people, we have seen some strange reactions to their work. Whether a prophet in the Old Testament, or an apostle or evangelist in the New Testament, the messengers of God have been met by disobedient people with disdain or even violence. Such reactions are not to be a surprise



Douglas Sims

to God's messengers. God has warned us to expect it. The Lord said in Matthew 5:12 that we are to rejoice even in the face of persecution for our reward is great in heaven. He noted that the prophets were persecuted before them. Matthew's record continues in the twenty-third chapter with the rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees for the treatment of the prophets and wise men. Stephen referred to such in his sermon in Acts 7. The old adage will continue to be true: "If you don't like the message, kill the messenger." Finally, Jesus told His followers to remember that He also was persecuted before they were. So it shall ever be if the messenger is true to the one who sent him to proclaim the truth.

The preaching profession is unique to say the least. There are some in the church that would do almost anything to prevent their son from being a preacher. They warn their daughter not to marry a preacher because they will never have a permanent home, make much money, etc. Little wonder that such people feel they can treat the preacher almost any way they choose without being guilty of sin. I know of one brother who said the preacher shouldn't be treated in the same way as a "brother" because he was just a "hired hand" of the church!

There are some in the church that would do almost anything to prevent their son from being a preacher. They warn their daughter not to marry a preacher because they will never have a permanent home, make much money, etc.

Continued On Page 4

Divine Limitations



Jerri Manasco

God is limited neither by time nor space. One to whom a thousand years is but a day (II Peter 3:8) certainly is not concerned about tomorrow! One who inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15) is not in the habit of counting the moments as though he must hasten his activity. One whose habitation is the heaven of heavens (I Kings 8:27) surely cannot be imprisoned or

encased in a space! While men may "impose" limitations on God, let it be loudly proclaimed that God is not restricted in his purpose because men want it to be so. Rejecting the eternal character of God and denying the omnipresence of God will not change the truth about God.

Suppose that one can sin at some remote point in time and then, due to the passing of years, expect his/her sins to be forgotten is but a futile hope! God does not forget the sin of the unrepentant sinner just because "enough time" has lapsed for things to be swept under the rug. The early annals of history reveal that mankind received something like 120 years to repent (Genesis 6:1-5ff). Man did not use that allotted time as God meant for him to and the flood came as scheduled. An evil woman named "Jezebel" was given "space to repent" but she failed to do so (Revelation 2:21). Time did not erase the evil. Ahab, too, learned that God does not bluff man with time. Having coveted the field of Naboth, allowing his wife to proceed with her wicked device, and compounding this with other transgressions, Ahab was notified that his "pay-day" was coming (I Kings 20-22). The passing of time does not interfere with God's memory.

Supposing that one can sin at some remote point in time and then, due to the passing of years, expect his/her sins to be forgotten is but a futile hope!

God has ordained a day in which a judgment shall confront us all (Acts 17:31). In view of this coming judgment the Lord "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). What we have done in the body (i.e., NOW) will determine the eternal sentence at the judgment. Time simply will not erase the fact that multitudes are going to face the judgment without the benefit of the cleansing blood of Christ! Time does not cleanse us of sin. The fact that God has chosen times for his redemptive work suggests that God uses time for his purpose but time does not dictate to him what his purpose must be.

He who spoke to Adam in the dawn of time and communicated to Noah and the patriarchs, and then spoke to Moses and the prophets is the same God to whom we must answer. "I am the God of Abraham . . . Isaac . . . and Jacob" (Luke 20:37; Exodus 3:6). He was the "Judge of all the earth" in Abraham's time (Genesis 18:25). (Incidentally, the fact that Sodom had spent years in the sinning business did not obscure God's judgment upon them one day! Their past caught up with them). This same God visited Israel with judgment (Amos 4:11, 12). He is Judge in the last day (John 5:28, 29; II Timothy 4:1; I Peter 4:1-6; etc.). This tells us that sin is going to be dealt with and offers no comfort to those who believe that somehow TIME will reduce the seriousness of transgression. God has no statute of limitations on sin!

It is as foolish to limit God in a space as it is to impose time restrictions on him. "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool . . ." (Isaiah 66:1). God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). Amazingly many people who verbally acknowledge this truth reject it in a practical way in daily life. Some folks would never think of telling lies, using profanity, or telling an unclean joke in the church building on Sunday, but for some odd reason this sanctity of life forsakes them when they depart from the meeting house. Is God not present at the factory Monday morning? "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:23-24). Where is the place where one may sin and escape the discerning eye of heaven?

"Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:23-24).

This home video generation can profit from a consideration of the principle presented in this article. For a few dollars it is possible to rent just about any movie that has been released. Of course there is nothing wrong with watching a clean family oriented movie any more than there is anything wrong with any sort of good, clean recreation. But upon what principle do people justify movies that are full of explicitly gory violence or unseemly sexual activity? Is it justified on the grounds that "it is 'MY' house and I'll do what I please?" Is such a household ruled by Christ? Remember that the Christian belongs to the Master (I Corinthians 6:20). Is it all right to defile the heart with filth at home but somehow the same thing becomes sinful outside the home? Where is God in all this? The same principle applies to the reading of pornographic literature or any such like thing (Galatians 5:19-21). Remember that David's sin with Bathsheba was committed in his own private environment, but as far as God was concerned it was still sin (II Samuel 11 & 12).

When shall the world AND THE CHURCH (!) learn that God does not overlook sin because of the time element or the place of its occurrence? Just because it was done "a long time ago" or it was "in 'my' house" does not remove the reality of God's justice toward sin. Repentance, not time, is the vital key to the pardon of sin.

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Following is the time required to read each book of the New Testament. Check yourself by this.

Matthew.....	1 hr., 23 min.
Mark.....	46 min.
Luke.....	1 hr., 25 min.
John.....	1 hr.
Acts.....	1 hr., 20 min.
Romans.....	35 min.
I Corinthians.....	28 min.
II Corinthians.....	23 min.
I Timothy.....	10 min.
II Timothy.....	7 min.
Titus.....	3 min.
Philemon.....	1 min.
Hebrews.....	26 min.
James.....	8 min.
I Peter.....	10 min.
II Peter.....	7 min.
Galatians.....	13 min.
Ephesians.....	13 min.
Philippians.....	8 min.
Colossians.....	8 min.
I Thessalonians.....	7 min.
II Thessalonians.....	4 min.
I John.....	8 min.
II John.....	1 min.
III John.....	1 min.
Jude.....	2 min.
Revelation.....	41 min.

Preachers And Churches

Continued From Page 3

Surely the apostle Paul experienced the strange attitude of the brethren to him as God's messenger. In I Corinthians 4:9-14 Paul points out that God seemed to have set forth the apostles last in the eyes of the world. He noted that they were fools for Christ's sake, but wise in Christ. He said they had been defamed, and made the filth of the world. These things Paul said were for a warning to them!

These things are not pleasant for the young man to hear who is desiring to preach. They should not be told that the job of being the messenger of God is a "bed of roses." If all men speak well of us, something is surely wrong! (Luke 6:26) Every man who aspires to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ should heed the Biblical advice to "count the cost." Many a preaching career is cut very short by not being ready for the hardships that sometimes go with the job.

Of course, there is a way to reduce the problems a preacher could encounter. He can determine to preach only what the people want to hear. He can make his message a flowery speech that leaves everyone feeling warm and wonderful and satisfied with their spiritual state, even though they may be lost and bound for eternal destruction. If he chooses this path, it might be more profitable to just preach for some man-made denomination that will pay more. The end result is the same. His work will not save the souls he preaches to anyway! Yes, the preaching profession is a strange one sometimes. But always remember, God only had one son, and he was a preacher! One who is a preacher of the true gospel of Christ is in good company.

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Words Of

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 23

Acceptable Preaching



W.A. Holley

Not all preachers are alike. In all ages past there have been true and false preachers. For example, the 450 prophets of Baal were false preachers; while Elijah was the one true preacher (I Kings 18:17-40). Miciah was one true preacher as opposed to 400 false prophets or preachers (I Kings 22:1-36).

Gospel preaching is extremely important.

John the Baptist was a preacher (Matthew 3:1; Luke 3:3). The twelve apostles were preachers (Matthew 10:1-15; Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 14, 37, 42, 43). Jesus Christ was the greatest preacher who ever lived, or shall ever live! (Matthew 4:23; 12:41). Paul and Noah, though separated by a vast space in time, were great preachers (I Timothy 2:7; II Peter 2:5).

The Holy Spirit through his word is inseparably united in the work of converting sinners to the will of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47). The Holy Spirit, in conviction and in conversion, never operates independent of, nor separate and apart from, the word of God or the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12; II Timothy 4:1-5). Verily, in all cases of New Testament conversions, a preacher was always present, the word or gospel was always preached, and those who believed were always baptized. Truly, the word of God is "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17).

"Preaching" is not a mere string of words. To "preach" acceptably, one must urge the acceptance or the abandonment of an idea or course of action. According to Bible standards, much that is called "preaching" today is not "preaching" in the true sense of the term. Any sermon which does not extol truth and condemn error is not Bible preaching. It is gospel preaching that changes the hearts of men and women (Romans 1:16-17; I Peter 4:17; I Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Preaching which accomplishes the good that God desires must be perceptive, both on the part of the preacher and the hearer. The preacher desperately needs a keen insight into the concept and meaning of the word of God; and, the hearer must be made to understand what the will of God is for him. The preacher should endeavor to meet the needs of his audience; and the audience should be made to sense its needs as well. Somehow, and in some way, both the preacher and his audience must be placed on the same wave length. Gospel preachers should never preach what the multitude wants, but, rather, what is needed!! (II Timothy 4:1-5).

Somehow, and in some way, both the preacher and his audience must be placed on the same wave length. Gospel preachers should never preach what the multitude wants, but, rather, what is needed!!

Acceptable preaching must be different, distinctive, with regard to its content (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; Jeremiah 23:25-30). A gospel sermon must be filled with the word of God, properly divided and properly applied. When one cannot tell the difference between a GOSPEL sermon and a DENOMINATIONAL sermon, something is radically wrong. All denominational terms should be eliminated. The language of Ashdod has no place in a gospel sermon (Nehemiah 13:23-24; I Peter 4:11). If a preacher cannot bring himself to do this, he should leave the pulpit. Many years ago, a certain gospel (?) preacher told me that he did not know whether he believed the Bible, or not. This scribe said to him: "Get out of the pulpit and stay out of it until you know that you believe every word of it without any equivocation whatsoever!!"

Gospel sermons should be plain, clear, and

straight forward. The preacher should never leave his audience in doubt as to what he means. In our day of higher and higher education, and since the ordinary listener does not understand the Greek and the Hebrew, preachers of the gospel would do well to hold such references to a minimum. II Corinthians 3:12 mentions "great plainness of speech." The eternal destiny of souls is at stake; hence there should be no ambiguity of speech. If the hearer cannot UNDERSTAND the preacher, what good has he accomplished? Jesus' sermons were remarkable, because "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).

Always the truth -- and nothing but the truth -- should be spoken or written, no matter what the pressure, where God's word is concerned (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). "Speak the truth and lie not," wrote Paul (I Timothy 2:7; Ephesians 4:15). Thus, let the truth be spoken in love. Only truth can bring freedom from the bondage of sin (John 8:30-32; 17:17). Truth must be believed and obeyed; but one cannot believe and obey the truth if one never hears the truth of the gospel of Christ (Romans 10:8-17). A preacher may shine (?) in personal work, or in missionary efforts; but if he fails in teaching the word of truth, all his efforts are a failure! The preacher's only business in the pulpit is to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:1-5). He is to be "instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:1-8).

Boldness should always characterize the preaching of God's preachers. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13 Cf. Vss. 29-31). Thus, the example of the apostles, in the midst of threatenings and persecution, spake and acted with great boldness, their examples should encourage preachers in our day to conduct themselves likewise. How about it, preachers??

Perseverance should characterize each gospel preacher! "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me;

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Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

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Kindness

Mark N. Posey

Paul, in his writings to the Corinthians, made a wonderful statement, which if practiced, would bless our lives as well as those around us. Paul said in I Corinthians 13:4 " . . . love is kind . . ." (ASV). Are you a kind person? Do you live your life trying to be kind to others? I certainly hope so.

I was shocked to learn that among professionals, dentists suffered from the highest percentage of burn-out on the job. The reason was lack of appreciation and kindness from their patients. How can that be true? Dentists work very hard serving people, relieving pain and offering preventive maintenance on teeth that saves a lot of money in repairs. Think about it though. How many people enjoy going to the dentist? Not Me! Probably not you. I asked one of my friends, who is a dentist, how many thank-you notes he had received for root canals, or abscesses, or even for filling cavities. His response was not surprising. NONE! Then he laughed at me for asking such an absurd question. So we see what a lack of kindness can do.

It has been said, "It takes up to nine affirming comments to make up for one critical one." Mark Twain once said, "I can live two months on one good compliment."

Mark Twain once said, "I can live two months on one good compliment."

President Bush, while campaigning for the Presidency of the United States, repeated his desire for America. He said, "I want a kinder and gentler nation." This is wonderful and admirable for him to desire, but it only echoes and reemphasizes what Jesus has been telling humanity for nearly 2000 years through the Bible. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

Let us always strive to "be kind one to another."

--Youth Minister, Arab Church of Christ, P.O. Box 376, Arab, AL 35016.

The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Fatherhood



David Wade

One of the most sobering moments in any husband's life is the day he holds his firstborn in his arms for the very first time. All of the planning for, and anticipation of fatherhood has not quite prepared him for the sobering fact that he is now "daddy." He beams with pride and joy, and yet he has a sinking feeling within as he now faces the tremendous responsibility of his new role. Will he succeed as a father, or will he fail? At the moment, he cannot know with absolute certainty. Only time will reveal that answer.

The Bible is the only dependable source of information that can assure success as a father. It tells of great fathers who succeeded, and of fathers who failed miserably. These examples are preserved for us that we might learn from the success and failure of others (Romans 15:4).

Lot is remembered as the father who "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13:12). Surely it came as no surprise to Lot that he was placing his family in an exceedingly wicked environment (Genesis 13:13). The account of Sodom's destruction and the loss of his wife who looked back and became a pillar of salt is a familiar Bible story (Genesis 19). Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). Soon afterward, his two daughters got their father drunk, committed incest with him and bore him two sons. The descendants of Moab and Benammi would vex God's people, Israel, as they marched toward the Promised Land. God "delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)" (II Peter 2:7-8 NKJV).

Lot paid dearly for the mistake of wilfully placing his family in a bad environment. Lot's tragedy should serve warning to fathers today. Paul said, "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupts good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). We should not think for a moment that we can subject our family to evil and expect them to be godly.

Eli is remembered as the father whose sons "made themselves vile and he restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:13). Phinehas and Hophni were grossly immoral (2:22). They had a reputation as "Sons of Belial" (2:12), that is, they were corrupt. Eli should have restrained them, and he refused to do so. He merely asked, "Why do ye such things?" (2:23). They refused to listen to their father's counsel and were slain of the Lord (2:25).

Paul commands, "fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). As fathers we should strive to train our children in the ways of the Lord while the opportunity is ours. Otherwise, we will reap a sad harvest like Eli.

King David is remembered as the father who was not content with the blessings he had at home. His "secret sin" with Bathsheba was no secret. One sin led to another, (as it always does), and soon David had Uriah killed to try to cover his sin (II Samuel 11:14-27). David confessed his sin when confronted by Nathan the prophet, and the Lord forgave him (12:1-13). However, as a consequence of his sin; David paid dearly for his transgressions. In the end, four of his sons were dead, and David was broken hearted. What a shame, what great cost, especially when you consider that "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hitlile" (I Kings 15:5).

No matter how good and upright a father may be, it takes only one besetting sin to destroy life. The Christian father is under obligation of God to be godly, true, honorable and pure. He must strive to set the proper example before his children.

Abraham is remembered as "the father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11; cf. Galatians 3:7). God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

God tested Abraham, calling upon him to offer his promised son, Isaac, as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:1-14). By faith, Abraham complied but was stopped short of slaying his son. He had faith "that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:19).

We can be thankful that none of us are tested of God as Abraham was tested. We should resolve to rear our children to be "living sacrifices" to the Lord.

Joseph is remembered as the adoptive father of Jesus. Joseph was a righteous man (Matthew 1:19) and was well suited for his special role as husband, father, protector and provider for Jesus' earthly family. When King Herod threatened to destroy the child, Joseph arose in the night and took Mary and the child and fled into Egypt as he was instructed of the angel (Matthew 2:13). After Herod's death, Joseph took his family to Nazareth where Jesus grew to manhood (Matthew 2:19-23). Joseph was an industrious man and worked as a carpenter in order to provide for the family needs (Matthew 13:55). Jesus also learned the trade (Mark 6:3).

Although we do not know much about Joseph, we

Continued On Page 3

Preachers And Churches

Part 2 -- Preacher Wanted: Age 30 to 50



Douglas Sims

When churches hire preachers some strange requirements are revealed. One of the first questions asked is, "How old are you?" Many times this ends the consideration of a candidate immediately. Some churches don't want a young preacher, others don't want an old one. By "old" one I mean about fifty years old and upward in many cases. Some seem to want a thirty-year-old preacher with twenty-five-years experience! It almost seems like the career span for professional athletes today! I know there may be many reasons for setting these age requirements, but to say we have no young preachers under thirty who are capable and mature enough to do the job is not telling the truth. And what of the rejection of a preacher over fifty? What would have been the effect on the church if everyone felt that men like Gus Nichols, Franklin Camp, Guy N. Woods and scores of others were of no benefit to the church as they grew older? Some churches have robbed themselves of decades of wisdom and experience by rejecting the seasoned preacher of the gospel.

Some churches have robbed themselves of decades of wisdom and experience by rejecting the seasoned preacher of the gospel.

Recently, I was studying in the book of Numbers and was reminded of a requirement found in the Law of Moses for the priesthood. Numbers chapter four states in five different verses that the tabernacle priests were to be from thirty years old to fifty years old. Verse forty-seven states it this way, "From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation." Is this where some get the idea for the thirty to fifty age bracket? Pardon the facetiousness, but the practice is as absurd as the suggestion that it came from the Law of Moses anyway. So, if you want Biblical authority for the practice, I suppose you will need to keep looking.

Another reason given for not hiring the older man is that he does not have the "energy" of the younger preacher. I know some sixty year old men who display more "energy" in the Lord's work than some twenty-five-year-olds! I suppose the greatest drawback would be that they might not be able to "captain the church softball team." I know of one church that wanted the younger man because he was to be part of the social activity of the young adults of the congregation. Nothing was said about his ability to do the Lord's work. If the church wants a "social director" why not advertise or one to begin with.

Some don't want the older preacher because he has "old fashioned ideas" about Christianity. While it is very possible for an older preacher to adopt liberal ideas in the church, the older seasoned preacher would be expected to be more conservative in his views of what is to be taught and practiced in the church today. In most cases it is not a matter of being out of date in his thinking but just holding on to a "book, chapter and verse" approach to what the truth is. I recently heard one

of our older preacher state that he was accused of having a "book, chapter and verse mentality." He simply replied, "Thank you!" Amen! Instead of age requirements, we need to base preacher qualifications on two scriptural admonitions. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11).

--330 East Ave., Cedar Town, GA 30125.

Fatherhood

Continued From Page 2

have some insight into his religious devotion. Joseph and Mary went every year to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover (Matthew 1:41). Jesus entered the Nazareth synagogue on the sabbath as was his custom (Luke 4:16). Evidently, Joseph and Mary were faithful to provide the proper spiritual environment for Jesus and his half brothers and sisters.

The Lord's church needs parents like Joseph and

Mary who will place the proper spiritual emphasis on life and will show more concern for devotion and service to God than for recreation and entertainment.

As fathers, we should learn from the mistakes of others and follow the example of those who are successful. If we can do this, then our children, with joy can "Honor thy father" (Ephesians 6:2).

Acceptable Preaching

Continued From Page 1

yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I have preached the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more" (I Corinthians 9:16-19). Just here we suggest that verse 22 be memorized and applied.

A preacher's heart must be fixed in the right

direction. With determination, with loyalty to God Almighty, with love for lost souls -- whether paid or unpaid -- he will preach the word, in season or out of season -- come what may. The preacher who can be "hired" to preach, can also be "hired" NOT to preach. May God Almighty ever bless and keep all faithful gospel preachers, in Jesus' name.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

P.S. This article was written against a background of more than 55 years of preaching.

Just What Is Good Preaching

Guy Orbison, Jr.

We live in an age where "slick" is in. I mean that people tend to prefer good "speakers" over good "preachers." There is a big difference. (Certainly a preacher wants to develop his best communication skills as public speaker, but he must remember that he is called to "preach," not to be praised as a "speaker."

Certainly a preacher wants to develop his best communication skills as public speaker, but he must remember that he is called to "preach," not to be praised as a "speaker."

I suppose the entertaining preachers of television have confused us as to the definition of good preaching. Even some within our fellowship have become popular speakers but good speaking does not necessarily make for good preaching. We often listen passively demanding that the speaker excite us.

Moses said he had never been eloquent and con-

fessed that he was "slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Paul also had limited speaking ability, telling the Corinthians, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech . . ." (I Corinthians 2:1, NKJV). In fact, some of the personal criticism leveled against Paul was that "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (II Corinthians 10:10). Yet, Moses was considered a faithful servant (Hebrews 3:5), and Paul taught considerable numbers (Acts 11:26).

Just what is good preaching? Timothy was told that "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ" (I Timothy 4:6).

If I were sitting in the pew, I would want someone in the pulpit who helped me to understand the word of God.

If I want entertainment, I'll turn on the T.V.
From *Four-State Gospel News*, (12/87)

Minstrel Or Messenger

Michael Duduit

In recent years I have, on several occasions, heard people discuss where they were when they heard about President Kennedy's assassination. One thing I haven't heard discussed is who they first heard the news from. Isn't it interesting that when a report is significant enough, we can easily forget the person who brought it?

On the other hand, Bob Hope has brought me countless hours of laughter, but I couldn't tell you a single joke I've ever heard him deliver. He stands out in my mind, not what he says.

That must have been what Phillips Brooks had in mind when he said, during his Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale: "The minstrel who sings before you to show his skill will be praised for his wit, and rhymes and voice. But the courier who hurries in, breathless, to bring you a message, will be forgotten in the message that he brings."

"The minstrel who sings before you to show his skill will be praised for his wit, and rhymes and voice. But the courier who hurries in, breathless, to bring you a message, will be forgotten in the message that he brings."

You won't need to watch many Sunday morning religious programs on television before you realize how much the minstrel-mentality has invaded the contemporary pulpit. With a half-hour of carefully designed sets, bright-eyed young singers and frequent pitches for contributions, it's hard to tell where the entertainment ends and the gospel begins.

The danger lies in the pressure to bring such antics into the local church. Will congregations which have spent the week glued to prime-time television have any interest in listening to someone stand in the pulpit and proclaim God's word? Like network executives in search of ratings, we can be tempted to adopt the latest gimmick, concentrate on hairstyles and fashions, spend more time on jokes than on interpreting God's Word.

Being a minstrel can even produce a crowd, so long as each show is better than the one before . . . and better than the show down the street.

On the other hand, the preacher who understands

his calling to be a messenger of God's Word may have to sacrifice a certain amount of fame. His congregation is likely to think far more about the truths he preaches than about his delightful delivery. They may hear God's Word and forget the preacher altogether.

L. D. Johnson told the story of a little boy who scurried onto the platform after church, climbed up

When Fishermen Don't Fish

Max Lucado

A cold spell reminded me of the first time I experienced the winter winds in the Hill Country. I was a teenager on a fishing trip. But what I caught that week was much more than fish. I caught an insight into human nature.

The fishing crew consisted of my father, my best friend Mark, and myself. We pulled our fold-out camper down to Lake Buchanan during Spring Break anticipating a week of sun, swimming, and white bass. That's not what we got.

During the first night, an unseasonable blue-northerner blew in. It got cold! The wind was so strong we could barely open the camper door. The sky was gray and the lake was a mountain range of white-topped waves. "No problem," we said, "We'll spend the day in the camper. We have Monopoly. We have Reader's Digest. We all know a few jokes." So we spent the day indoors.

The second night it got colder. This time it wasn't the wind that made the door hard to open, it was the ice! We tried to be cheerful. "No problem. We can play Monopoly another ten times. We can re-read the stories in the Reader's Digest. Surely we know another joke or two." But as courageous as we tried to be, it was obvious that some of the gloomy gray had left the sky and entered the camper. I noticed that my father didn't have a good sense of humor (He told me to quit telling jokes.) It was a long day. It was a cold night.

When we awoke the next morning to the sound of sleet slapping against the canvas, we didn't even try to pretend to be cheerful. We were flat-out grumpy. Mark became more of a jerk with each passing moment. My dad couldn't do anything right and I wondered how someone so irritable could have such an even-tempered son. We sat in misery the whole day.

The next day was even colder. My dad wisely decided it was time for us to pack up and go home.

I learned a hard lesson that week. It's worth underlining. "When those who are called to fish don't fish -- they fight."

to the pulpit microphone, and began to call out into the mike, "Look at me! Look at me!" An older man turned to his wife and said quietly, "I think we've heard that sermon before."

As messengers of a living God, may our message always be, "Look at Him."

Via Preaching May-June, 1986.

Christians never squabble when they are fishing for men. They don't have time! It is when we stay indoors that we grow irritable and cranky. Energy intended to be used outside is expended inside. Instead of casting nets, we cast stones. Rather than extend helping hands, we point accusing fingers. And instead of being fishers of the lost, we become critics of the saved.

Instead of casting nets, we cast stones. Rather than extend helping hands, we point accusing fingers. And instead of being fishers of the lost, we become critics of the saved.

The next time you are upset with a brother or sister, do yourself a favor, do the church a favor -- get out of the cabin and go fishing . . . for men.

Via The Pillar

Cave City, Arkansas 72521.

Committed, Or Just Carried Away?

There is a difference between commitment and just getting "carried away." People often get "carried away" and it is exciting; it can lift us up to great heights of accomplishments, but, it can let us down just as rapidly as it will pick us up. Getting all "carried away" is spasmodic and temporary. It seems that one cannot be "carried away" all the time.

On the other hand commitment has a more permanent sound. It is not a height to be reached; it is a foundation on which to build. Commitment suggests stability. Yes, things are sometimes accomplished by getting "carried away," but the real strength of the church lies in those members who are constant in work, giving, attendance, etc. They don't allow themselves to be up one minute and down the next; hot and cold. They can be trusted because they are committed.

. . . Author Unknown

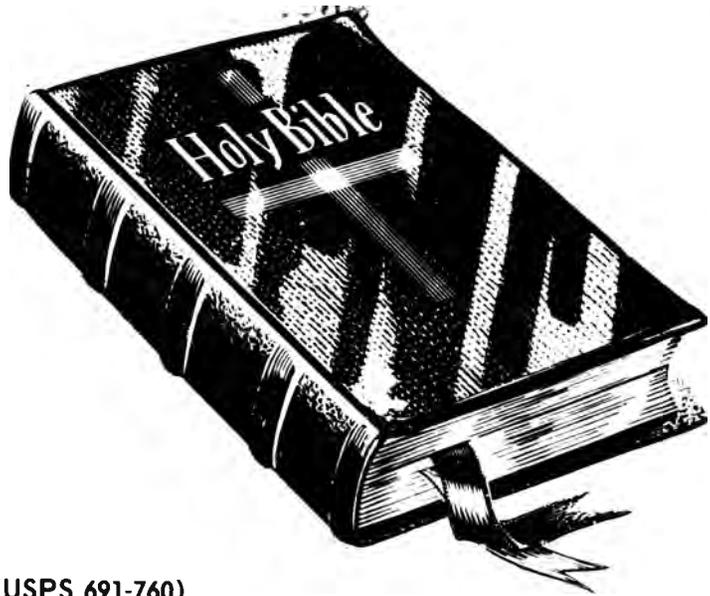
Life's clock

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power,
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad, indeed,
To lose one's health is more;
To lose one's soul is such a loss,
An no man can restore.

The present only is our own,
Live, love, toil with a will;
Place no faith in "Tomorrow,"
For the clock may then be still.
--Author Unknown
Booneville Informer, Nov. 8, 1981

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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"I'll Try To Work God In"



Edsel Burleson

showed the folly of serving him "when it suits us" as he declared, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

Jerri Barber told the story of a loaf of bread that fell from a baker's basket. When it hit the pavement, a crumb broke off and lay beside it. Almost instantly three sparrows made a swoop for the crumb, and when the contest was over, two of the birds flew away without a bite while the other carried off a meager breakfast. The loaf was untouched in the frenzy. Only the crumb had seemed a worthwhile prize to the birds. Just little wider range of vision, a little less greed, and each bird could have been more than satisfied.

Some folk just never find time to "work God in." This was Felix's problem. He had heard Paul reason "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." He was even convinced he had been told the truth -- he trembled. His reaction, however, was "I can't work God in today." He said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25).

Someone told of an article which appeared in "The Proclaimer" Rapid City, S.D. many years ago entitled, "His One Mistake." It reveals the "things" that get priority, yet were so useless in the long run.

"He brushed his teeth twice a day -- with a

Too many folks have the attitude that Jesus encountered in Luke 9:57-62. Three men were interested in following the Master. Two of them would follow if they could "work him in" with some things they already had in their minds to do. Each said, "I will follow you but first I have some other plans which must be taken care of." Jesus

nationally advertised toothpaste. The doctor examined him twice a year. He wore his overshoes when it rained. He slept with his windows opened. He stuck to his diet with plenty of fresh vegetables. He relinquished his tonsils and traded in several worn out glands. He golfed -- but only 18 holes in one day. He never smoked, drank, or lost his temper. He got at least eight hours of sleep each night. He was all set to live to be 100.

"The funeral will be tomorrow. He is survived by 18 specialists, four health institutes, six gymnasiums, and numerous manufacturers of health foods and antiseptics."

When priorities become altered, strange and hurtful things begin to happen. A man is caught up in his work. He lives and breathes his job; and management likes to have it so. Many executive positions at least encourage, and sometimes demand, that a man have almost no family life. His focus must be on his job twenty-four hours a day. It's the way to get ahead in this dog-eat-dog world; but once he has established his priority, others must stand aside, and sometimes there is a fearsome price to be paid.

We have a constant battle with priorities. We struggle about the value to self of the temporal or spiritual things, and often do not give a second thought to the spiritual. It seems that many are satisfied just to "work God in" if it happens to be convenient.

We have a constant battle with priorities. We struggle about the value to self of the temporal or spiritual things, and often do not give a second thought to the spiritual. It seems that many are satisfied just to "work God in" if it happens to be convenient.

The poet showed the tragedy of such philosophy in the following lines entitled, "I Counted Dollars. . ."

I counted dollars, while God counted crosses,
I counted gains, while He counted losses.
I counted wealth, by things gained in store,
But He valued me, by the scars that I bore.
I counted honors and sought for ease,
He wept, counting the hours on my knees.
And I never knew, till once by a grave,
How vain these things we spend life to save!
--Via West End News 420 Seventh Street S.W.
Birmingham, AL 35211.

The Practice Of Truth

David Lipscomb

(Editor's Note: David Lipscomb wrote the following article for the Gospel Advocate. It appeared in the November 28, 1907 issue.)

Many preachers spend their time to combat the sects, to expose their errors and show the mistakes they make. This is all right if this work is kept in its right place and not permitted to crowd out other more important work. There is great danger that we let opposition to the sects and to error usurp the place of fidelity to God and the practice of truth. It is easier to fight error than it is to practice truth. It is more in harmony with our fleshly nature to fight error and errorists than to subdue the flesh and obey God. So we often substitute that for this. Much of our zeal is for party dogmas rather than for practice of truth.

Much of the preaching consists in opposing and exposing the errors of others. This party zeal becomes a substitute for love of truth and the practice of godliness. Many preachers seem to think that the way to convert the world is to expose religious error. Hence, the preaching to the world is

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

-Acts 26:25



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David Wade . . . Editor

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The Practice Of Truth

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chiefly opposition to the sects. If the sects were all destroyed, it might be easier to convert the world, but the work of converting the world would still have to be done.

The wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove, is needed in preaching the Gospel. It is more important to preach the truth than to expose error. This was the order of Jesus and the apostles. They first presented the truth of God, the working principles of the religion of Christ. Jesus first gave the sermon on the mount, the exhibit of the practical truths of the religion he came to establish. He then opposed error as it conflicted with these truths. If we would practice this order now, it would greatly help us in our work. We would do better work and do it more effectively.

When we go to a new place, especially to preach, it seems to me common sense, as well as divine wisdom, would prompt us to first present the truth of God concerning the way of salvation and stir up opposition as little as possible until they had seen the truth as a connected whole. To stir up the prejudices of the people is to prevent their seeing the truth with impartiality and fairness. It does them a wrong and defeats the end in view. There is very great danger in making ourselves sectarians in opposing sectarians. When we go to a new place, let us present the truth in as kind and gentle, yet as earnest, spirit as possible. Present the truth in the spirit of the truth, and oppose errors only as others bring them up to conflict with truth. Do it with earnestness, but do it in a spirit of kindness and love and prove by experience that the order of Jesus and the apostles is the best for us and for the world.

The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"It's Vacation Time Again!"



David Wade

Summertime is here and it's vacation time again! It is nice to get a vacation and "leave everything behind" for a few days and "get away from it all." However, in our vacation plans, let us be mindful that we should never leave the Lord behind or try to get away from him. After all, the Lord never leaves us behind, or takes a vacation from us, or neglects us (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 13:5). Satan certainly never takes a vacation. He is always looking for the opportunity to tempt us to do wrong (I Peter 5:8).

Please permit me to make a few suggestions as to how we can include the Lord in our vacation plans.

First, since it is the Lord's will that Christians dress modestly (I Timothy 2:9), it behooves us to do so, whether at home or on vacation. This writer knows of "faithful" Christians who dress "modestly" at home, but quickly adorn themselves in strings and straps when at the beach in another state. The reasoning seems to be that, "No one knows us here, so our influence is not hurt. Therefore, it is alright." Where has God said, "It is not sin so long as no one you 'know' knows about your behavior?" Quite the contrary, we are responsible for what we wear, where we go, what we do, or whatever, whether people know us personally, or not (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 10:30-31).

Second, when we are away from home, we ought to put forth the necessary effort to assemble with the saints. Just because we are away and cannot assemble with the "folks back home" does not excuse us of our responsibility to assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25-26). Each congregation would do well to purchase for the church library a directory of the congregations of the churches of Christ, **Where the Saints Meet**, published by Firm Foundation. Each family could then copy out of it the locations of the church on their travel itinerary.

Most congregations really love to meet and get to know visiting Christians from other parts of the country. Furthermore, we are an encouragement to them, if for no other reason, as our presence helps take up some of the slack for their members who are away on vacation. Perhaps their members are doing the same. We will also benefit greatly in that we will get to meet our brothers and sisters who are also a part of the Lord's spiritual family on earth. Furthermore, our visit will afford us the opportunity to learn something from them about

their methods of accomplishing the Lord's work. If scriptural and practical, we may wish to suggest to the leadership back home what others are doing.

Third, it is appropriate for us to leave our regular contribution with the saints back home. After all, the local church budget depends upon us for its support. The Lord does not excuse us from giving on "the first day of the week" (I Corinthians 16:2) simply because we are on vacation.

Most of us have "vacation with pay." We would feel slighted if our employee refused to give us our "well deserved" vacation pay. If we make a loan, our creditor does not excuse us of the monthly payment while we are on vacation. By what stretch of the imagination do we assume God excuses us from our regular contribution so that we may lump it into our vacation?

These few suggestions are offered to help us see the need to include the Lord in our vacation plans. May we never forget that the Lord has made arrangements for our eternal "vacation."

Be A Man!

Don McWhorter

The world is in trouble! God founded the world on the home and the home is falling apart. Society can be no stronger than the foundation on which it is built. God's intent was good and right. The home is the necessary foundation of civil government and the church. These are in great trouble because the homes that comprise them are troubled homes. At the turn of the century one marriage in fifty in our country was broken by divorce. Today, the situation is one out of two. So terrible is the situation concerning violence and rage in the home that a study by the University of Rhode Island concludes that aside from a riot or war the home was the most dangerous place in the world to be!

So terrible is the situation concerning violence and rage in the home that a study by the University of Rhode Island concludes that aside from a riot or war the home was the most dangerous place in the world to be!

The chief failure of the home is the failure of man. When God speaks of the home he speaks in no uncertain terms of the accountability of man. As elders are responsible for the work and conduct of the church, so is man responsible for the

Continued On Page 3

Preachers And Churches

Part 3 -- Unethical and dishonest practices between them



Douglas Sims

It is hard to realize that both churches and preachers are guilty of deceit and dishonesty in their dealings one with another, but it happens. If anyone in the world should be able to deal with one another with total trust, preachers and church leaders surely should!

It is a well-known fact that some preachers and some church leaders have at times lied to one another. It makes one wonder if either have read the penalty the Bible placed on lying! (Rev. 21:8). If these men cannot place their complete trust in each other, in any situation, how could they expect to do the Lord's work together?

Probably the area in which these problems most frequently occur is in the employment of a preacher to work with the local congregation. Both churches and preachers are guilty of some practices which are totally unbecoming of Christian brethren. Churches are notorious for "stringing along" a number of prospective preachers for months on end while trying to make a decision. Many of these churches never tell those they decide not to employ of their decision. I was once told by a Tennessee church that they were almost sure I would be asked to consider working with them, and I would hear from them in one week. It has been about nineteen years now and I still

haven't heard from them. I have often thought I ought to call the elders and ask them if they have made a decision yet! Thankfully, not all congregations are guilty of such practices.

On the other hand, some preachers send applications to practically every church they hear is looking for a preacher. Many times they are just looking for a bigger church or a bigger salary, and are not too concerned about the Lord's work. Also, some have used an offer from another church to get a raise in salary at home. Meanwhile, someone who really needs a job is sometimes lost in the shuffle of applicants. Preachers need to be more concerned with the work the Lord intended them to do. Becoming a professional pulpiteer is a far cry from one whose overwhelming desire is to "seek and save the lost"! The sacrifice of worldly things are not to be compared with the reward that awaits those who lead the lost to the savior.

I know of more than one church that has found a desired preacher to be "available", and they have done some very unethical things to get rid of the present preacher. I know of a group that brought such a preacher into the community to introduce him to the members while the local preacher was out of town. I also know of a preacher who has worked together with members of a church to get rid of their preacher so he can get the job. Still another church hired a preacher without telling him that he would be let go in one year when the preacher they intended to hire would be willing to move. Obviously, if he had known this he would have taken the job. Those elders knew he wouldn't so they purposely kept their plans from him.

In many instances elders and church leaders have made promises of a regular increase in salary after

a predetermined time, and then failed to keep their word. It seems that they suppose it would be too much of a problem for the preacher to move

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Be A Man!

Continued From Page 2

home. To make the home what it should be men must become what they are supposed to be:

1. **A LOVER.** God describes the real man as a lover. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives (Ephesians 5:23-27). Christ's love for the church is held forth as the proper example. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Isn't a man's wife his closest neighbor? "Love your enemies." Even if there are problems, a man must love his wife. Love is the cement that holds us together. All of us remember the song that first brought fame to The Captain and Tenille, "Love will keep us together." For his wife's sake, for his own sake, for the sake of his children, for the sake of the church **A MAN MUST LOVE HIS WIFE!**

2. **A PROVIDER.** In I Timothy 5:8 Paul warns that one who does not provide the necessities of his family is in serious trouble. He may be able to supply only the barest needs, but this is his duty. Proverbs 31 describes the worthy woman. She is hard working, thrifty, and industrious, but she is supplying only the icing on the cake. The greedy man who spends his earnings on his greeds rather than on the family needs is a sinner.

3. **A PROTECTOR.** Because woman is the weaker vessel man serves as a buffer between her and the cruel world. He absorbs that cruelty rather than letting it hurt her. Genesis 3:19 says a woman's desire shall be to her own husband. He meets her emotional needs, her mental needs, and her physical needs. He is her friend and confidant. She feels free to talk and never needs to feel defensive or inadequate. Any man who puts his wife down publicly or just in her own presence is not the man God wants him to be. She needs to dream with him, plan with him, work out things with him as an equal. Paul warns the men at Colosse, "Husbands, love your wives **AND BE NOT BITTER AGAINST THEM!**" So many men won't accept responsibility. They are weak and indecisive but blame their wives for their own weaknesses.

4. **A TEACHER.** God's man teaches his children (Deuteronomy 6:3-9; Ephesians 6:4) and his wife (I Corinthians 14:34, 35). He is a student of the Word that he may be a teacher. His first concern is to teach his family.

5. **A RULER.** Genesis 3:19 says man **RULES** over his wife. It's a rule of love. From the time he says "I do!" he can never make another decision without asking, "What would my wife want?" and "What would be best for my wife?" Her subjection to him is a subjection of respect and reverence for him (I Peter 3:1-7). Otherwise, prayers are offered in vain.

The solution to the problems of the world and the church is for men to be real men -- God's men at home. On this foundation hangs everything else.

--Via **TRUTH**, Fayette Church of Christ, Fayette, AL 35555.

Ministering To Parents

As a youth worker and a teacher, I see that there is a need in every congregation for a more indepth source of strength for our teenagers to come from within the family. The task of building the total being of our teens includes the relationship with their parents.

Parents say that they can really talk and be open with their teenager, while their own teenager says that their parents do not communicate well with them. That sounds like a problem area. Parents, I hope you can see a real need of improving your personal relationship with your son or daughter.

Perhaps you've seen the "Ten Commandments for Teenagers," as written from a parent's point of view. Let's look at the "Ten Commandments for Parents," as written by a teenager. These were first printed in 1972 in the New Home, A Texas church bulletin. They were written by the teenage son of the man who was the preacher at the time. They follow:

1. Don't spoil me. Don't give me everything I ask for. I'll just ask for more.
2. Be firm with me. Don't "spare the rod."
3. Don't pull authority on me. If I ask why I have to do something, don't say, "Because I said so." If

you have to prove your authority, you have none.

4. Don't correct me in front of others. Embarrassment leads to resentment.

5. Don't make rash promises. If you can't deliver what you say you will, don't tell me that you can. Broken promises are far more painful than broken bones.

6. Don't tax my honesty. Don't put me in a position that would tempt me to tell a lie.

7. Don't put me off when I am inquisitive. If you're too busy for your own children, you shouldn't be a parent.

8. Don't say that you're perfect. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

9. Don't fail to apologize. You're never too big to say you're sorry.

10. Don't worry when I say, "I hate you!" No matter how often I get mad at you, I love you both. I owe you a debt that no amount of money can repay. Only my continued love for you can pay you back for what you've done for me.

--BULLETIN (Campbell Street Church of Christ, Jackson, TN).

Whoever Remarries First And Whoever Remarries Second

James C. Mettenbrink

During the days of Jeremiah, Judah was on the threshold of Babylonian captivity for continually ignoring the will of God and for adapting the ways of the idolatrous nations around them. In his prayer concerning the coming onslaught of Jerusalem, Jeremiah acknowledged that it is not without man to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23). Indeed, this has always been the plight of mankind and is the very reason God gave him His word. For nearly 2000 years we have had the completed revelation of God's will showing man the way of salvation. Yet man persists in following his own wisdom. This might be expected of those who are unbelievers, but why is it that Christians twist (and ignore) the divine guidance to suit themselves? This attitude is readily evident with the many prevailing doctrines concerning divorce and remarriage. Many Christians are bent on getting every divorcee comfortably remarried regardless of the plain teaching of the New Testament

Many Christians are bent on getting every divorcee comfortably remarried regardless of the plain teaching of the New Testament.

Some of the world's best bridge builders are in the church and are fervently attempting to get over and around God's law of divorce and remarriage. The various bridges include (1) that an adulterous remarriage is not a continuous state but a one time act from which one may repent and which is somehow changed into lawful marriage; (2) that since non-Christians are not amenable to God's law of marriage, whatever occurs before baptism is of no biblical consequence; (3) that an adulterous remarriage between non-Christians is somehow changed into a lawful marriage in their baptism. Another bridge that is frequently crossed is the "after the divorce" justification that allows remarriage. We are being told that when a couple divorces for a cause other than fornication, one of the parties may lawfully remarry. But which party may do so? Advocates respond that the person "who remarries first" commits adultery, thereby freeing the other person to lawfully remarry.

In discussing this view, proponents assert "It just isn't fair for God to require the innocent mate to live a celibate life." They argue, "How could God be so severe in his laws?" They remind us that "God never intended that man should live alone." Emotions and misplaced sympathy are the unstable foundation of this bridge. Indeed, God said it is not good for man to live alone (Genesis 2:18) -- that is why He created woman and instituted marriage. God's plan for an orderly family and society is one man and one woman for life (Genesis 2:24)! However, it was not God who did the divorcing; it was man who did so and then against the wishes of God. The cry of unfairness regarding the mate who is divorced unwillingly discounts that God never intended for the pair to be divorced but rather for them to be reconciled (I Corinthians 7:10-11). This supposed unfairness and resultant celibacy and loneliness highlights God's seriousness about the sanctity of a lifetime marriage between one man and one woman.

In meeting the testy Pharisees, Jesus stated the most complete account of God's universal law of divorce and remarriage. "Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9 NKJV, cf. Matthew 5:32). When Jesus said let not man put marriage asunder (Matthew 19:6), was he not saying that it was within the power of man to divorce? The only cause for a divorce which allows remarriage is when fornication is committed by a spouse. Then only the mate who did not commit fornication is free to remarry without committing adultery. Is it not clear from the scripture that if the cause for the divorce is not fornication that neither spouse can lawfully remarry? If both parties remarry they both commit adultery. Yet, there are those who say that after a divorce where fornication was not the cause, one of the spouses can lawfully remarry. Effectively the proponents say that the first party to remarry commits adultery. This adulterous remarriage then frees the second party to lawfully remarry. Essentially, this denies that the divorce ever occurred in the first place. It implies that the one who remarries first effects an ex post facto divorce (regardless of which party initiated the original divorce) by the agency of his own adulterous remarriage. If the case is a denial that the first divorce actually took place (yet they were in fact divorced by decree), then how can a person divorce and not divorce

simultaneously? Or is it the case that those advocates are implying that two divorces are necessary? The first at the time of original divorce and another by the person who remarries first. Where is the biblical authority for either of these views?

The word for adultery rather than fornication was divinely chosen to show that the remarried party in fact belongs to the mate of the first marriage (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). They are to be reconciled to each other (I Corinthians 7:10-11). Jesus said he who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery and he that marries her that is divorced commits adultery (Matthew 19:9). If either or both of them remarry, adultery is committed. Adultery damns one to hell (Galatians 5:19, 21). Surely God is not complicated or vague in matters eternal. What constitutes adultery is simple. Again, Jesus stated simply that whosoever puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery and he who marries her who is divorced commits adultery. If either of them remarry adultery is committed. The only exception to this law is if one of the mates commits fornication. God grants the privilege of remarriage to the innocent mate.

Where is it written that whoever remarries first frees the other to lawfully remarry? Emphatically, it is "nowhere!" Let's stop bridge building! Let's stop sending people to their eternal destruction and let's stop going beyond what is written by the inspiration of God.

--810 Greenwood St., Montgomery, AL 36107.

Preachers And Churches

Continued From Page 3

because of this failure to live up to their agreement.

Some church leaders are well practiced in keeping the preacher in a constant state of uncertainty about his future. One man once told me that he would be a part of the congregation for the rest of his life, but I would be there for a little while at best. He was right about one thing. He was there for the rest of his life, but he was buried in a matter of weeks after making that statement. No worker can do his best with the threat of his job being terminated constantly being brought to his attention.

Jesus taught us that we should treat others as we would be treated. This is a formula for success in every human relationship, including churches and preachers.

The answer to every problem between churches and preachers is simple. Jesus taught us that we should treat others as we would be treated. This is a formula for success in every human relationship, including churches and preachers. Admittedly, the work of preachers is like no other in the world. Sincerity and honesty on the part of both will go far toward making the partnership in the vineyard of the Lord just as successful as it should be.

Church leaders need the prayers of all the members of the congregation. Preachers need the prayers of every member also. Those who fervently pray for one another surely can work together in the greatest task on earth.

The Things We Give Away

When we give away a flower
It's fragrance stays behind
Like a special little "Thank You"
For doing something kind.

When we give away a pleasant word
To cheer someone's distress,
The glow of it remains with us
To bring us happiness.

When we give away a loving smile
To lighten someone's heart,
Our own is always lightened
By the love that we impart.

In fact, the sweetest things of all
That brings us joy each day
Are not the ones we try to keep
But those we give away.

--Selected



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of T

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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Vengeance Belongs To The Lord

Elwood Holt

A young man who had great cause of complaint against another told an old man he was going to be avenged. The good old man did all that he could to dissuade him; but seeing that it was impossible, he said to him, "At least my young friend, let us pray together before you execute your design." Then he began and prayed this way, "It is no longer necessary, O God! that thou shouldst defend this young man, and declare thyself his protector, since he has taken upon himself the right of taking and seeking his own revenge." The young man was touched and shamed, and falling on his knees, asked pardon of the great God he had wronged.

My friends, this story introduces a line of thought that is most important. To whom does vengeance belong? Do I have the right to go out and retaliate when I am offended? Am I to accept his philosophy, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?" Jesus condemned this expression and these actions in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:38, 39. He said, instead of executing vengeance when mistreated we should, "Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." I am aware of the fact that this is extreme language, designed to teach us the all important lesson that vengeance does not belong to man.

When harmed, the first thing we think about is to go out and take care of our oppressor. When we see our friends and loved ones harmed, maybe not bodily, but by a hot tongue, we want to do real violence to the offending party. But let us remember that God reigns in Heaven. He sleeps not, nor do His eyes ever close. He is much more observant than any of his creation, and he never misses an injustice that is heaped upon an innocent party. If offenses in our lives become violent and take on the nature of physical persecution, then we have every right to "appeal unto the Caesar," as Paul did, and, of course, Caesar means the law. The law is established for the explicit purpose of protecting us and ours from bodily harm. But, the kind of retaliation the Bible condemns is our retaliation when some injustice not so severe takes place. And, in the case of bodily oppression, I am to let the law take its course. It is a real calamity when

human hearts are alienated by petty differences and strife. Human hearts are to be blended together in love and mutual admiration one for another. Differences will come, and when they do, we need to sit down calmly and talk them over. If we are wrong, let us get right. Let us make things right with the parties we have offended. If they are wrong, then it behooves them to take the steps toward reconciliation. This is the Lord's will. If I try to be reconciled to an offended friend and he manifests that hypocritical attitude, "I can forgive but I can't forget," then I am to go on my way, leaving him and his heart, to the Lord. I am not to waste any more time fooling with him after I have done my utmost but failed to melt his heart.

The person who is not willing to wipe the slate clean has not forgiven. God help us to be bigger than petty retaliations. When we take the divine end of the rope in our own hands, to mete out vengeance on our enemies, we concede to all concerned that we have cut loose from our Lord. Have you ever thought of it like that? When we take God's work away from Him and attempt to do it ourselves, we sever all relations with him and stand by ourselves.

When we take the divine end of the rope in our own hands, to mete out vengeance on our enemies, we concede to all concerned that we have cut loose from our Lord. . . When we take God's work away from Him and attempt to do it ourselves, we sever all relations with him and stand by ourselves.

The fellow who is always trying "to get even" with someone needs to know this. His walk is a

walk by himself and after a while, it is my opinion that he will fall out with himself. Repentance destroys sin. Sins, unrepented of, will stare the unrepentant in the judgment. We need to live as far as we can at peace with both God and man. Yes, offenses will come. Differences will separate us now and then. When they do, let us work out our problems. If we can't, then let us leave the consequences to the Lord. He has said, "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

--Via - Country Shopper Grand Bay, AL 36541.

Some Things Take Time



Dalton Key

Ours is an age of instant everything, from instant rice and instant potatoes, to instant credit. In our obsession with the instant, we've grown impatient with the natural flow of life, with its seasons and gradual changes. Quite frankly, we want what we want; and what's more - we want it now, if not sooner. But some things require time and patience. Marriages are not made perfect by both partners ingesting a special "Wedded Bliss" capsule. Poor marriages can become good ones and good marriages can become even better; yet they grow and flourish over a period of time, and not without the committed, continued efforts of those involved. Read again Ephesians 5:22-33. Submission. self-

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Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

-Acts 26:25

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Some Things Take Time

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sacrificing love, and godly reverence are not attributes which miraculously arrive on one's doorstep overnight. They must be worked on, worked out, and worked through - slowly, in spite of countless mistakes and setbacks, until one or both partners become more like Christ. Too many recent honeymooners expect their fresh and untried relationships to be as deep, as strong, as apparently smooth as those of happily married, Christian, golden-anniversary couples. Good marriages take time.

And the same is true with respect to our spirituality. Growing and maturing spiritually does not come as the result of a five-day training course. The Christian life is simply that - a life; it requires no less than a lifetime investment. Pauls and Peters are not born, neither are they made in a day. They are slowly molded over a lifetime of trial and adversity. Only after years of struggle may one say with the aged, battle-scarred apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7). Growing in Christ takes time.

Pauls and Peters are not born, neither are they made in a day. They are slowly molded over a lifetime of trial and adversity.

Yes, we've come to love the quick and easy way, rushing here and there to purchase the latest "instant this" and "instant that." But in our maddened frenzy over the one-minute world through which we run, let us never forget that truly important things, things of real substance and worth, take time.

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Freedom



David Wade

Declaration of Independence; "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

We should ever be thankful for our liberties, especially our religious freedom, and strive to pass them on to generations yet unborn. We are constantly in danger of losing this freedom even as ancient Israel lost theirs.

All of Joseph's family were ultimately in slavery in Egypt. The path to bondage started when Joseph's brothers sinned against him and sold him as a slave (Genesis 50:17).

Later, Israel was taken into captivity because of her sins. "In the ninth year of Hoshea the King of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria . . . For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God . . . And walked in the statutes of the heathen whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. . . Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there were none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hands of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight" (II Kings 17:6-8, 18-20).

Jeremiah foretold of Judah's doom. "And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear . . . Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, said the Lord, and Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations . . . And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment: And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:4, 9, 11).

It seems that many of the Jews of Jesus' day for-

got this important lesson from history. Pointing the way to spiritual freedom, Jesus taught them, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Their quick reply was, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" (John 8:33). What about Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Rome?

The examples in the Bible are written for our learning (Romans 15:4). Because of sin, our nation can also go into bondage, or be destroyed. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). "Righteousness exhalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Remember, ten righteous people in Sodom could have saved that city from destruction (Genesis 18:32).

The Lord wants his people to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). As salt, we are to exert a saving influence in our world. As light, we must teach God's word and dispel spiritual darkness. The future of the church and our nation depends upon it.

We were made free from sin when we "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). This has reference to our baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3-4). Having been freed from sin, we must no longer live in sin (Romans 6:2, 7).

The Christian who lives in willful sin and disobedience to God is lost and without the hope of heaven in his present condition. In addition, he contributes to the erosion of the church and fall of our nation.

On the other hand, as faithful Christians, we enjoy the best of both worlds, with spiritual and political freedom. Let us so live that we may always enjoy these blessings.

Essentials For Church Growth

Don McWhorter

1. **Attitude Of Happiness.** In announcing the constitution of his spiritual kingdom (Matthew 5) Jesus said it was built on happiness. Happiness is an attitude and the bc-attitudes tell us that attitudes are deliberate choices and actions on our part. True happiness is a spiritual fruit (Luke 8:11; Galatians 5:22, 23). The book of Philippians is built around the joy of being a Christian. Others must SEE that joy. As the salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16) we have a profound influence on the life of others. Ours is the only REAL life (John 10:10). Others must see the happiness of our lives as Christians.

2. **Climate Of Love.** Love is the badge of discipleship (John 13:34, 35). God has given the world

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Observations From Acts 9:31-43

Clifford Dixon

In these verses we see the work of Peter among the Christians in Judea after the conversion of Saul. Let us notice four things of interest.

1. Planting Of The Brethren In The Faith. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts 9:31). They were getting their roots down in Christianity and were thus strengthened. We are to continue in the faith grounded and settled (Colossians 1:23). We need to pay close attention to keeping ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21). We are to not be weary in well doing (Galatians 6:9, 10). We need to be like trees planted by rivers of water and bringing forth fruit in our seasons. We are strengthened by regular worship, study, prayer, and spiritual exercise of telling others about the Lord. Sermons and Bible lessons, sound and Biblically based, are a great help to establish the brethren.

2. Proving The Word To Be True By Miracles. Aeneas was cured of a disease which kept him bedfast for eight years, and Dorcas was raised from the dead (verses 34-40). The purpose of miracles in the early church were to confirm the word according to Mark 16:20, and Hebrews 2:3, 4. They had the desired effect as can be seen in verse 35 after the healing of Aeneas, in that all Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord. Also, after Dorcas was raised at Joppa, many believed in the Lord (Acts 9:42). These things are written so that we might believe and have life through his name (John 20:30, 31). We need to read these miracles time and again, and realize that the gospel message is the truth and we need to submit to it.

3. Promoting The Gospel By Good Works. Dorcas was known as a Christian because she used her needle to make coats and garments for the poor widows. Christians have the command to not only preach the gospel to every creature but also visit

the fatherless and widows in their affliction (James 1:27). We are to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith (Galatians 6:9, 10). If we are not moved by the needs of deprived people, we are probably not moved by their lost condition either. One of the finest introductions of Christianity is to be known as a caring people.

If we are not moved by the needs of deprived people, we are probably not moved by their lost condition either.

4. Presentation Of Dorcas Alive. When Peter had raised Dorcas, he called the saints and widows and presented her alive. Don't you know great joy and praise was known among these people! Their dear friend and benefactor had been raised from the dead and was in their fellowship again. Miracles like this are not being done in our day because the gospel has been given and confirmed (I Corinthians 13:8-10), but when Jesus comes again all the dead will rise to die no more (John 5:28, 29). When people are sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the word they are presented to Christ without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:26, 27). Then, on the resurrection day, the kingdom will be presented to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

--Route 3, Box 62 Brewton, Alabama 36426.

Why Is The Church Losing Its Young People?

David P. Brown

The title of this article should actually be: "why are parents losing their children to the devil?" The answer is not a new one. Parents are ignorant of the Bible, and they do not respect Bible authority. Hence, they have lost sight of the design and purpose of the home as well as that of the church (Ephesians 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 3:1-12; Hosea 4:6; Matthew 5:6; Luke 8:15; John 7:17; Colossians 3:17; John 12:48). Invariably such homes are unstable and are governed more by the emotion of the moment than by reasonable Biblical truths. I know that children can reject the

best examples and teaching of godly parents; but that is not what I am concerned about in this article. Seldom, in the aforementioned homes, are the husbands and wives at peace with one another; for there is between the two a constant struggle for power. If they stay together, the result is that one or the other finally gives in to the domination of the other; hence, the "hen-pecked" husband or the "dominated wife" shuffles on to life's stage. Just imagine how such an ungodly mess is shaping and molding the children of such an environ-

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Essentials For Church Growth

Continued From Page 2

the right to judge us by whether or not this climate is present in the church. God is love and those who are his children are partakers of the divine nature. Love is the celestial cement that holds us together. The church in Corinth was plagued with problems but the solution to all of them was love (chapter 13). "Love never fails" (verse 8).

3. God-centered atmosphere. Paul admonishes us, "Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus." What kind of mind did Jesus have? One with a holy reverence for God. We must be led by this kind of spirit or we are none of his. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Romans 8:4).

4. Spirit Of Encouragement. In enumerating the actions we call worship we often ignore this one. We are told that encouragement is one of the purposes of the assembly (Hebrews 10:24-31). It is badly needed and that's one reason why dire consequences are pronounced on those who forsake the assembly. They are not receiving what they need and are also depriving others of something they owe them. Barnabas was "the son of encouragement." Israel failed and wandered 38 years in the wilderness because "our brethren discouraged our

hearts" (Deuteronomy 1:28). The discouraging word of the ten spies bore a tremendous penalty. We have the privilege of helping brethren bear their burdens (Galatians 6:1, 2).

5. Conformity Of Unity. Oneness is demanded by God. Ephesians 4:4-6 describes the unity God demands. We cannot have this unity without the spirit that produces it. Read Ephesians 4:1-3. Too often we try to enforce conformity without the spirit of unity. Conformity fails unless the spirit of unity prevails. The division at Corinth in I Corinthians 1 could be solved and unity achieved only by applying the principle of love in chapter 13.

6. Respect The Authority. This is the basis for both unity and conformity. Without respect for authority there is chaos. Christ's word is law (Romans 8:2) and by it we will be judged (John 12:47, 48). A holy respect for this authority solves most problems before they even start.

7. Spirit Of Evangelism And Discipleship. The Great Commission demands that the gospel be preached to the whole world. Then every obedient soul must be further taught (Matthew 28:18-20). We must love the souls of men and find excite-

ment in seeking and saving the lost. We must find the same excitement in the study of God's word that feeds the soul and enables it to grow. Both the milk and the meat are to be included in the spiritual menu. Everything is designed toward one end: that we all become like Christ.

8. Vision Of Faith. Faith gives eyes to the soul (Hebrews 11:1). Seeing the great world of the unseen gives us proper perspective for living the Christian life. By this means Noah saw a flood 100 years before it came (verse 7) and Moses saw God (verse 25). "By faith we can see it afar" we often sing. Without faith a Christian is blind and sometimes it's a whole congregation of such; blind leading the blind.

9. Fervent Prayer. In this matter we must not slack (I Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1). When they saw the power of prayer in Jesus' life the disciples asked that they be taught. Individually and congregationally we need more praying. This is the true spiritual muscle of Christianity.

--Via Truth - Fayette
Church of Christ, Fayette, AL 35555.

Why Is The Church Losing Its Young People?

Continued From Page 3

ment!

Such parents have tried to "bowl," "skate," and "volleyball," their children into faithful adults, and then they wonder why they leave the faith. If they had half as much Bible in their heads as they do pizza and hamburgers in their stomachs, there would be far more hope for children growing into faithful adults.

Such parents have tried to "bowl," "skate," and "volleyball" their children into faithful adults, and then they wonder why they leave the faith.

You will also note that parents of the above stripe are very rarely content to create "party animals" out of their own children; they are bound and determined to force such down other folk's throats. Children are not encouraged to be at home and to mind their own business. To the contrary, they are like a bunch of starving wild apes let loose in a banana plantation. Hence, one of the tremendous problems in the church today is the attitude that ever demands fun and games rather than Bible study, mowing the widows' yards, visiting the sick, attending gospel meetings, helping out on work days at the church building, etc.

All of us love some kind of recreation; and I do not believe anyone can have more fun than I. The problem I have attempted to spotlight is not one of true recreation, but it is one of "playing at our

work and working at our play."

I have always believed that, as a rule, when busy Christian parents have the opportunity to stay at home with their families and do things as a family they should take advantage of such opportunities.

Yes, God's people of another time "... sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (Exodus 32:6); but God was anything but pleased with them. Paul said, "... when I become a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). I would strongly suggest that parents follow Paul's inspired admonition and train their children accordingly.

--Southwest Bulletin, Austin, TX 78748.

Have You Lost Your Sight?



Victor M. Eskew

Before one becomes a Christian he is an individual who is destitute. Paul's words of Ephesians 2:12 accurately describe the alien sinner. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants or promise, having no

God in the world." Sadly, many do not recognize their sinful condition. These individuals continue to live in a lost state.

Only those who see themselves as they really are will enter into the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:6). About three thousand on the day of Pentecost realized their hopeless condition. They responded in obedience to Peter's instructions. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41, 47). All who obey the gospel initially must see themselves as those who are in rebellion against God. They must recognize their inability to deal with their condition. They must give up self and turn themselves completely over to the will of God.

As one continues his life as a Christian, he must always see himself properly. When one loses his sight, his rejection by God is sure. A case in point is Saul, the king of Israel. When Saul was chosen to be king, he saw himself properly. "And Saul answered and said, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" (I Samuel 9:21). At his introductory ceremony before Israel, Saul had to be sought out among the baggage of the people (I Samuel 10:21-23). Saul truly thought himself unworthy of such a mighty and prestigious

position in Israel.

"Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"

As time progressed, however, Saul lost sight of his littleness. In I Samuel 15, we read that God commanded Saul to go and destroy the Amalekites and all they possessed. Saul, however, chose to disobey. He returned with Agag, the king of Amalek, and the sheep and oxen. He was rebuked severely by Samuel for his disobedience. Note particularly verse 17; "And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" Samuel's words imply that Saul no longer saw himself as he once did. He lost his sight.

His lost sight led to his rejection. "And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou" (I Samuel 15:26-28).

The question which now arises is: "Have you lost your sight as Saul did?" Elderships which fail to practice church discipline must answer the question yes. Preachers who fail to reprove and rebuke in their preaching must answer with a yes. Members who involve themselves in the works of the flesh must answer yes. And all those who would fellowship the unfruitful works of darkness must answer yes.

Brethren, we need to recall how we viewed ourselves when we first obeyed the gospel. Then we

need to do now as we did then. We should forget our selfish opinions, give up our selfish ways and yield ourselves completely and wholly to God. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

--Rt. 6, Box 204-A Yazoo City, MS 39194.

Weaning The Mule . . . Don't Try It!

I have heard of the farmer who once had a young mule. He was a very healthy mule and a very willing worker. There was one objection the farmer decided to wean him of his feed. His plan was to do it so slowly that it would scarcely be noticed. As each day went by the mule received less and less food. Finally, as the farmer got him down to nothing at all, he died! Many a member of the Lord's church has undergone the same subtle suicide; missing only a few times, neglecting to give as prospered. It is a tragic situation for a Christian to allow himself to be "weaned away" from salvation.

"The Insight", Ferriday, LA

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"I am not mad, m
Words of Truth and

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 1989

NUMBER 26

What Is Your Reason For Church Membership?



W. A. Holley

It is always proper to give a scriptural reason for any religious act or determination. "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). These words,

by Peter, were addressed to children of God.

To "sanctify" the Lord in one's heart is to permit him to dominate one's thoughts and actions. To "be ready" to give a Bible answer to a Bible question means to be prepared, both in knowledge and in conduct. The world asks: "How can I hear what you say, when what you are is forever thundering in my ears?" Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher and preacher who ever lived "began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:2).

The reason for one's hope in God and in things eternal must be founded upon the "rock" of God's everlasting truth (Luke 6:47-48). Houses built upon the "sand" cannot endure the test of time. Often truth is buried beneath the rubbish of Roman Catholic dogma, denominational doctrines, and commandments of other men. We must "dig deep" to uncover truth long hidden to many.

If you were asked why you are a member of a certain church, how would you answer? Would any of these suggestions represent your response?

(1) "I am a member of the Catholic church (or, the Methodist church, or, the Baptist church) because my parents were members of such a church." Such was not true of Paul, nor of Peter, nor of many other people in New Testament times. They left Judaism, and became members of the church of Christ (Philippians 3:4-11; Romans 16:16).

(2) Are you a member of a certain church because its location is merely convenient? Surely, there must be a deeper, more demanding, reason! Are

you a member of a certain political party simply because it was the most convenient? To give "a reason" means that one must be well-informed (II Timothy 2:15).

(3) Are you a member of a certain church because it is the most popular church in town? If the Pentecostians had followed such course, they would never have become members of the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-47).

(4) Are you a member of a certain church because it owns the finest church building in town? If this is your reason, you would not have become a member of the Lord's church in apostolic times -- for the early church possessed no church-buildings of their own! (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). The fact is that 300 years passed before the early church owned its own building.

(5) Are you a member of a certain church because it teaches what you believe? If you already believe the truth, well and good; but if you believe contrary to the Holy Bible, you are in grave danger (Romans 3:3-4)! Why not "search the scriptures" to learn the truth of God (Acts 17:11), then go where it is taught.

(6) Are you a member of a certain church because its preacher is so sweet and kind, and because he is such a scholar -- because he just sweeps one along with his beautiful flow of language? Apollos was such a preacher; but he did not know the truth! He had to be taught "more perfectly" the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7).

More: Are you a member of a certain church because its membership is composed of the rich, the elite, and the powerful from a social or a political point of view? Revelation 3:14-22 tells of a church that had everything, but in reality had almost nothing!

We shall now discuss some Biblical reasons for membership in the New Testament church.

Obviously, one should not put church-membership on the same basis as membership in a fraternal organization, or in a social or civic club, etc.

(1) One should be a member of the Lord's church in order to be saved. Those who have been "born again" . . . "born of water and of the Spirit," are added, by the Lord, to his church (John 3:3, 5;

Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47).

(2) One should be a member of the Lord's church that one might be in "the house of God" or the "family" of God (I Timothy 3:14-15). The house of God is his church or his family. How does one enter the family of God? Through the avenue of the new birth (John 3:3, 5; I Corinthians 4:15; II Corinthians 5:17; I Peter 1:22-25; 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

(3) One should be a member of the Lord's church in order to be under the rule of our High Priest -- The Lord Jesus. Jesus is High Priest "over his house;" and his "house" is his church (Hebrews 3:6; 4:14-16; 10:21; I Timothy 3:15).

(4) One should be a member of the Lord's house, or church, or family, so that one may be in a position to worship God. On the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, when about 3,000 souls heard and obeyed the gospel, they were added to the church; then these church members began to worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 2:47). Those outside the Lord's church, or outside his house, cannot worship God acceptably (Galatians 1:4; I John 5:19).

(5) To be in Christ is to be in his church. No one can be out of the CHURCH and be in CHRIST at the same time! When one through faith, repents, confesses Christ, and is baptized into Christ, that one, at the same time, is "baptized into the one body," which is the church (Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 12:13).

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:4-5). "But now are they many members, yet but one body . . ." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:20, 27).

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.



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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

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Just Two Hours Before Worship!

"Twas two hours before worship, and all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring -- not even my spouse.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds.
No visions of Heaven danced in their heads!
Ma in her curlers, and I -- what a sap! --
Had just settled down, 'Dick Tracy' in my lap!
When out in the lawn there arose such a clatter;
I sprang from my chair to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Threw open the curtain, and up went the sash.
The sun on the breast of the new-planted sod
Gave luster to nature -- the brilliance of God!
And what to my wondering eyes should appear?
My neighbor's lawn-mower, and it in high gear!
I thought to myself, and just had to say:
"Just a 'fool' would save this for the Lord's Day."
Then I nodded my head, was turning around,
And I looked in the mirror, and saw with a frown--
A round little mouth drawn up in a bow,
Stubbornness! Conceit! --that I should know!
"I haven't been to church -- what was the day?
--The day before Mama went on her way!"
A cozy home, but life that was smelly.
And will-power that's just as soft as jelly!
"I'm part of the church! -- have a spouse who would go!

My Lord commanded it -- this much I do know!"
I woke up my mate, and said: "How about you?"
She smiled, and inquired: "Sunday School too?"
We spoke not a word, but went right to work!
Dressed all the children -- and they were so pert!
Neighbors heard us exclaim as we drove to the right:

"Two services this morning -- and another tonight!"

--(Author unknown).

The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"In Season, Out Of Season"



David Wade

The expression "be instant" means be urgent, or be at hand. The same word is translated "at hand" in verse six; "For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand." The words for "in season" (eukairos) and "out of season" (akairos) mean that one should be ready to preach the word whether the conditions are convenient or inconvenient, opportune or inopportune, favorable or unfavorable. David Lipscomb said in his commentary on this verse, "Do not await favorable moments, but create them, to teach the word even under unfavorable circumstances."

The faithful preacher is commanded to "reprove," that is, convince, or bring the fault home to the offender. He is to "rebuke," that is, censure or warn. He is to exhort, that is to comfort or encourage. This is to be accomplished with all longsuffering, or patience, and with doctrine, that is, the scriptures.

While we must be urgent "in season and out of season," it should be apparent to us that some times are more in season for certain topics than other times. Solomon makes the point well, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to pluck up that which is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; cf. vss. 4-8).

Perhaps we can illustrate the point with reference to the time of our preaching. It seems to me we would accomplish more good by giving special emphasis to modest apparel when the weather begins to moderate, and members are tempted to wear scanty clothes, rather than in the dead of winter when most everyone is appropriately clad. It seems to me that faithful attendance and the sin of absenteeism should be stressed at the Sunday morning services rather than waiting until Sunday night or Wednesday night class when the folks who need to hear it won't be present, and the opportunity to reach them is lost.

The preacher should plan his preaching to make the best of his in-season opportunities. There are a number of approaches the preacher can use in his planning.

1) Biblical principle. Preach through a book of

the Bible during the year. This could involve expository preaching or selected passages for sermon treatment.

2) Congregational needs. It is good to periodically survey the congregation and determine those areas where they need further development and growth.

3) Congregational suggestions. You must use caution with this one because people usually wish to hear their favorite texts expounded. This could result in the same suggestions being offered year after year.

4) Trends of the times. By reading newspapers and magazines and watching the news, you can know what people are thinking about. However, this approach does not lead to a systematic development of Bible knowledge. Sermons should come from the Bible and not from the newspaper.

5) Subjective principle. This involves the preacher speaking on things that interest him. The problem with this approach is the preacher is tempted to develop hobbies to the neglect of other important parts of the whole counsel of God.

6) Calendar principle. This involves looking at the year as a whole, taking note of important dates and delivering sermons that relate to that theme. The preacher is under no obligation of God to studiously avoid the topics of Easter, Thanksgiving, or Christmas. These dates provide an excellent opportunity to distinguish between revealed truth and human tradition.

7) Season principle. This one is very similar to the calendar principle. The seasonal principle makes the sermons complement the seasons of the year. Andrew W. Blackwood in his book, *Planning A Year's Pulpit Work*, suggests to keynote undergirding in the Fall, recruiting in the Winter, instruction in the Spring, and heartening during the Summer.

These suggestions are offered to help us see the need of making the best of our opportunities to preach God's word. By seizing our opportunities, and planning our work we are better prepared to "be instant in season, out of season."

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Seven Shameful Questions For Unfaithful Christians

Jonah 1:8-12

David E. Armstrong

When one reads the account of Jonah, he might realize quickly that this is an account of a prophet of God trying to run away from his responsibilities, for the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, ". . . saying, go to Nineveh . . . cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me . . ." (1:1, 2). As a Christian, one can not help but realize his responsibility to the Lord and follow men. As with Jonah, the Christian has a similar call, except its scope is more broad. ". . . Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel to **every creature**. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:15, 16). Are you among the faithful Christians who are doing the Lord's will? Or, are you like Jonah, attempting to run away from your responsibilities?

It is sad to say, but like Jonah, so many Christians today are found trying to run away from their Lord's commandment to "Go, preach the gospel." We read, "And Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (1:3). Jonah found a ship going his way, "And he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof" (1:3b). Brethren, Jonah **never reached Tarshish**. Does it seem you have found your excuse (ship)? And does it seem to be going your way? You can rest assured, as Jonah never reached his destiny, you will fail also in all your excuses!

He Found A Ship Going His Way

Again, have you found your excuse(s) which seems to be carrying you away from your Lord and the responsibility He has given you? Friends, it cost **Jonah more than he could have ever imagined!** And if you continue to flee your responsibilities to God and your fellow man, it is going to cost you more than you are willing to pay in the end, your soul and likely, those you love, for Christianity begins at home.

Having To Face The Shameful Questions

After Jonah had found a ship which seemed to be carrying him from his duties, he was asleep in the lower part of the ship. Those who fall into a deep sleep are unaware of the dangers around them; so are those who have found their seeming excuses not to "GO and PREACH" the GOSPEL to the LOST WORLD! As with Jonah, they are unaware of the "storm" which threatens their eternal life and the life of those around them. God sent out a great storm into the sea, and this made the marines realize they were in danger of perishing.

Turn your attention now to the seven questions these fearful mariners asked Jonah, and apply them to the Christian today who is seeking to flee from the presence of the Lord God and His command to "Go and preach" the gospel to those lost because of sin! Consider the "Seven Shameful Questions For Unfaithful Christians."

No. 1: "For Whose Cause Is This Evil Come Upon Us?" (V. 8).

"When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; **and thou givest him no warning**, nor **speakest to warn the wicked** from his wicked way . . . his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezekiel 3:18). It could be those of your own family, friends, or loved ones. What answer could one

give to those on the judgment day, lost because no one tried to warn them of their wicked ways? "for **whose cause is this evil come upon us?**" The truth was, if Jonah had not attempted to run away from his Lord and duty, these mariners would not be facing a storm which threatened their very existence; they were about to perish, and it would take Jonah realizing his duty to God and mankind to save these men from the storm. The Lord had caused the storm to arise, to make Jonah aware of his duty to God and mankind. Can you as a Christian sit by, knowing that judgment day is approaching, and fail to obey your Lord's commandment, "Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15, 16)? How would you as a Christian answer this question to those lost in sin, knowing you had the words that could save every one around you from their sins, the gospel of Christ?

No. 2 "What Is Thine Occupation?" (V. 8B).

"I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Hebrews 10:23). Jonah was a prophet of the Lord God; you and I as Christians are **KINGS AND PRIESTS** of God (Revelation 1:6; I Peter 2:5, 9). Are you walking worthy of the **vocation (occupation)** wherein you were called? Would people have to ask you to detect whether you are a Christian? Malachi 2:3-10 teaches a great lesson on the responsibilities of God's priests and how they abused this great privilege. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, **for he is the MESSENGER OF THE LORD OF HOSTS**" (Malachi 2:7). "Ye have caused many to stumble at the law" (Malachi 2:8b). Say brethren, what is your occupation: how would you answer those who are perishing without the knowledge of God's law?

No. 3: "And Whence Comest Thou?" (V. 8C).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things which are above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1, 2). It seems that many Christians today simply do not want to tell others of the hope and joy that can be found only in those who know where their treasure is (Matthew 6: 19, 20). Jonah was from the promised land, the land which the Lord God had given those who loved him. Now look where Jonah is among those who are searching for salvation! And only Jonah knew the Lord God that could calm the storms, not only of the earth but of a soul sinking in despair. We in the kingdom of God need to awaken and realize that without the word of God, the world is lost in sin, doomed to an everlasting damnation without hope of the gospel of Christ. Why are you in the kingdom of God at this time brother and sister? "Whence comest thou?"

No. 4: "What Is Thine Country?" (V. 8D).

Jonah makes a full disclosure; He tells them he is a Hebrew (v. 9). He tells not only of his nation, Israel, but of his religion. And being a Hebrew, therefore being the more ashamed of being a crimi-

nal, he was running from the God whom he had come to trust and love. Recall what Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Could we be as Jonah, claiming to be Christians, but seeking a way to escape our responsibilities?

No. 5: "And Of What People Art Thou" (V. 8E).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Christ tells those who would come into the kingdom of God, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Again Christ said, "Ye are of your father the devil . . . when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Now, knowing what the Lord would have you do as a disciple and knowing what you are really doing, say, "Of what people are thou?"

No. 6: "Why Hast Thou Done This?" (V. 10).

In their fear of perishing, the mariners asked Jonah why he had failed to do God's will, "For the men know that he fled from the presence of the Lord" (1:10b). What possible answer could we as Christians give to those whom we love? Will they stand before God condemned unto an everlasting torment and separation from God? Will someone say to you, "Why hast thou done this?"

No. 7: "What Shall We Do Unto Thee?" (V. 11).

Brethren, from Jonah's own lips came his condemnation, "And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me into the sea" (1:12). Like Jonah, will we know our destiny? Jonah came to realize his planned trip would never be completed. We as Christians have the promise and hope of everlasting life, but if we, as Jonah, fail to carry out our Lord's commandments, we too will have sealed our own destiny.

Jonah was a prophet of God who sought to run away from his responsibilities to his God and fellow man. Have we as Christians done this? Jonah **REPENTED** and **WENT TO DO HIS LORD'S WILL!** What about you? If you are an unfaithful child of God, will you not consider following Jonah's example to the end, and **REPENT**, and do your Lord's will?

The Holy Spirit warned through Paul, "Wherefore he said, awaken thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14). Like Jonah, who had to be awakened to the dangers that were around him and those on board the ship, if you are not doing the Lord's will today, please awaken to the reality that not only are those around you lost in sin and perishing, but, as Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay; but except ye **repent**, ye **SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH**" (Luke 13:3, 5).

--Via Yokefellow 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118.

Do We Care Enough?



Betty Burton Choate

Nothing of value comes without cost. If I am to have a new home or a new car, I have to take into consideration what the total cost will be in money and effort and then decide if I am willing to make that kind of investment. A new baby comes into the world at great personal cost to the mother who bears it. A husband invests his life in the support and care of his family. A nation is built of the blood and sinew of its citizens. Nothing of value comes without cost.

American Christians are the recipients of a vast inheritance. It cost our predecessors a great deal. Believers in the truth have paid for their conviction through loss of good will and in some eras through loss of their lives. But they loved the truth enough to propagate it, to pay the price, and to pass the treasure on down to us.

Founders of our nation, though not usually Christian in the Biblical sense of the word, believed in Biblical principles strongly enough that they defied the kingdoms of Europe in order to establish a new country with foundations laid on the guarantee of freedom and righteousness. Laws were based on the moral truths of the scriptures, and our fathers gave their lives for the development of the country and the system they believed in. We have received the fruits of their sacrifices.

The question facing us is a deadly serious one. What does our inheritance mean to us? Do we care enough to invest whatever is demanded in order to preserve what we have?

Some of us do. A few realize that our country can survive only if a balance between good and evil is maintained, so they are doing all they can to teach truth publicly and privately. Some are sacrificing greatly of their time and money.

But the number of mental breakdowns is growing; the crime rate is growing; the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions is growing; the horrors of immorality are growing, along with the resulting scourges: venereal diseases, AIDS, broken homes; the use of alcohol and drugs is growing; physical abuse within families is growing; the number of juvenile delinquents is growing.

If we are watching the news, we are also aware that the following of Eastern cult religions is growing as well. Many Americans today believe in horoscopes (from Hindu teachings), transcendental meditation (also Hindu), reincarnation. A shocking number have become professed followers of these religions and are practicing their doctrines with total dedication. Temples and mosques are being built in many places in this country. Paganism is a growing thing in our beloved America!

Do we really care about preserving our precious heritage? An honest survey will convince any of us that we are losing ground on every point mentioned.

No, we don't care -- not enough, and not enough of us. Too many are satisfied to attend a service occasionally and do nothing more. Another percentage attends regularly but feels justified, content in the misconception that faithfulness in atten-

dance means an eternal reward in heaven.

Too many have forgotten, or never learned, that the Christian is born to serve, that the lives under the strict instruction of his master to ". . . go and teach. . ."

Do I care enough? Do you care enough? Perhaps a good yardstick for measuring our answer would be Mark 8:34: "Who ever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

How long has it been since you had to choose between self and service to God, and you denied self, actually sacrificing of time or money for

And There He Built An Altar



Cecil May, Jr.

One could trace the journeys of Abraham from Haran through Canaan by the smoke of the altars he built for worship. "And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, . . . and there builded he an altar unto the Lord" (Genesis 12:6-7). "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, . . . and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord" (Genesis 12:8). "And Abram went up out of Egypt . . . between Bethel and Hai, unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord" (Genesis 13:1-4). "Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord" (Genesis 13:18).

As Abraham worshiped God wherever he went, so the man of God today recognizes the necessity of worship. Worship is an outward expression of one's inward adoration of God.

On another occasion Abraham built an altar and worshiped. God commanded him to take his "only son" (Genesis 22:2), the son of whom it had been said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12), and offer him upon an altar as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2). Abraham believed God's promise that Isaac would bear him seed and trusted God's command even when it did not seem to fit the promise, and obeyed, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead" (Hebrews 11:19). So Abraham left his servant and the animal on which he had ridden and said, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship" (Genesis 22:5).

In this act of acceptable worship we see three things.

(1). True worship is according to God's word. Abraham did exactly what God said. Worship is not offered to men, but to God and should be structured as God directs, not as man pleases.

(2). True worship is offered unhesitatingly and sincerely. Abraham "rose up early in the morning" (Genesis 22:3) and "took Isaac" and "took the fire in his hand, and a knife" and "they went" (Genesis 22:3-6). He did not argue or wait or make excuse.

(3). True worship brings a blessing. "Because thou hast done this thing, . . . I will bless thee"

Him? How long has it been since being a Christian was a burden of service that could be described as a cross borne? How long has it been since you followed Christ further than to the house of prayer? Remember, He went about teaching and doing good.

Do we care enough? Our own judgments of self may be harsh, they may be lenient, they may even be lies. But history will write a totally honest answer to the question. If the present trend of complacency and inactivity continues, that answer will have to be, "No, we really didn't care at all."

(Genesis 22:15-18). If we worship for what sensory pleasure we can derive, we will likely go away empty. If we come to adore God, we will carry away great blessings.

Is your journey through life marked by faithful worship to God?

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Read The Bible - For Your Own Good

In 1966 the **Reader's Digest** carried an article written by Dr. Smiley Blanton entitled, "The Bible's Timeless And Timely Insights." In It Dr. Blanton recalled this conversation:

"The other day a new patient noticed a Bible lying on my desk. 'Do you, a psychiatrist, read the Bible?' he asked."

"I not only read it," I told him, "I study it. It's the greatest textbook on human behavior ever put together. If people would absorb its message, a lot of us psychiatrists could close our offices and go fishing."

The patient thought he had meant a token study, like the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. But Dr. Blanton said it's much deeper. So he explained, "Take your own case. For the past hour you've been telling me how you've done this, tried that, all to no avail. It's pretty obvious that you're worrying yourself into a state of acute anxiety, isn't it?"

After sharing some thoughts with him from Ephesians about the grace of God and how forgiveness of sins could really take place, the patient concluded, "Maybe I should do a little Bible reading on my own."

Maybe you should too, because:

1. **The Word of God Can Give You Hope.** For every person there is an opportunity to be "born again" (John 3:3, 5) and start all over again. No matter what you have done, been, or are you can find a new life in Christ.

2. **The Word of God Can Give You Peace.** Jesus told His disciples, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace" (John 16:33).

3. **The Word of God Can Give You Assurance.** "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (I John 5:13).

Whatever the demands on your schedule, do not neglect spending some time each day in God's Word - it's for your own good.

--Bulletin Cleveland Church of Christ, Cleveland, MS.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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Young Whippersnapper Preachers And Old Mossbacked Elders



Cecil May, Jr.

Young zealous preachers and seasoned patient elders. Often they clash.

Young preachers may want to start new programs. Some have new ideas about how to involve and motivate members to do more. Some have become convinced of new dangers and heresies and believe they need to untangle the congregation from some of the people it

has been involved with. Some come out of colleges or preacher training schools believing they have all the answers to the only questions anyone ought to be asking, and quickly become convinced that elders know nothing at all.

Elders may have seen new programs before. Some know from experience what will appeal to the people of the congregation and what will have the opposite effect. Some have more confidence in men they have supported and known for years than they have in their new preacher. Even though they have not had formal schooling in Bible and theology, they have studied the Bible and worked with their people for years, and often think they know more about both than any preacher the age of their grandson.

Perhaps it is the old generation gap in a new guise. It is not a problem everywhere there is a young preacher working under elders; some mesh together beautifully. Perhaps some things could be said that would help it work better everywhere.

A Word (Or Three) To Preachers

God knew there would be young preachers when he put older men in the place of oversight (I Peter 5:1-5). There are qualities important to leadership that only come with time. Some people seem to be born with more wisdom than others, and some wisdom is given by God in answer to prayer (James

1:5). Some facets of wisdom, however, come only with gray hair (Proverbs 20:29). As someone has said, "Wisdom is the ability to make good decisions. The ability to make good decisions comes from experience. Experience comes from making bad decisions." It is hard, but necessary, for youth to learn to respect and defer to the wisdom of the aged. Translation: Hey, kid; those old men may be smarter than you think.

Second, the elders are the overseers. God has made it so. Elders ought not to act like bosses (I Peter 5:3), but the rest of us are to submit to them as bosses (Hebrews 13:17). As the sign on many an office wall says, "The boss may not always be right, but he is always the boss." We are not to disobey God in order to submit to the elders (Acts 5:29), but in matters of judgment, we are to defer to them and obey. They were exercising good judgment when they hired you, and had the authority to do so; recognize when they hired you, and had the authority to do so; recognize the same judgment and authority when they direct your work, or even when they tell you to go.

Third, there may well be some things you know that the elders need to know, some ways you can help them grow. If you think you see that, and they do not, work to help them, but do it with respect. Go slowly. In discussion and study with them, back up on the matter at issue to the point where you and the elders see things alike. Camp there. Stay with those things until you understand and appreciate one another's position and convictions on them. Then move on to the points of disagreement, listening to their point of view as well as advancing your own. In your discussions with them, demonstrate your respect for them. In conversations with others about them, maintain solidarity with them.

Since the elders are elders, at least it can be said that someone at some point in their lives thought they were the kind of men described in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Give them the benefit of the doubt. If even some of them are the kind of men there described, they will work wisely for the good of Christ and his church. The main question for you

to consider is, will you?

A Word (Or Three) to Elders

Wise elders recognize the good qualities of the young, seek to encourage their zeal and exuberance, and work patiently with their lack of experience and wisdom. Paul told two young preachers not to let anyone despise them but to teach and preach with all authority (I Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:15). By the same token, we should not despise the youth of those who come to us preaching the word of God.

Elders are not proud or self-willed (Titus 1:7). They will be willing to listen, therefore, and to learn even from those that do not know as much as they do about some things. The old can learn from the young. The teacher can learn from the pupil. While elders know some things that cannot be taught in school, some of the things taught in school are important too.

Third, as long as the present practice continues, of elders hiring preachers with an education in Bible to do most of the preaching, one of the most important aspects of the elders' work will be the direction and oversight they give the preacher. It is a particularly sad mistake to limit that oversight to deciding which preacher to hire and when to make a change. When criticisms of the preacher arise, whether from the elders themselves or from the membership, the elders should counsel with the preacher. If he needs to make some changes, they should tell him what changes, and show him how to make them. If he does not study enough, encourage him to keep office hours, buy him some books, send him to some good lectureships. If he does not visit enough, go with him to some of the people he needs to see, help him make out a schedule, suggest some of the things he needs to accomplish with his visits. If he preaches too much on the same thing, or is neglecting some subject that needs attention, talk to him about it; give him the reasons why a change should be made. It is sad for the preacher, the church and the elders, all three when the first a preacher learns of the congrega-

Continued On Page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Your Summer Of Opportunity



David Wade

Summer is officially here. Enjoy it, for summer will fade into fall and fall into winter before you realize it. The changing of the seasons should remind us that time is fleeting away.

Paul was acutely aware of his situation and realized his time was short. From prison he urged Timothy, "Do thy diligence to

come shortly unto me" (II Timothy 4:9). Paul's request was not to be taken lightly. At the close of his letter he pleaded, "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (II Timothy 4:23).

It was a long and dangerous voyage from Ephesus to Rome. Paul had personal experience with shipwreck, having survived at least four (II Corinthians 11:25; Acts 27:41). The wreck in Acts 27 was the direct result of sailing too late in the season. The captain of the ship had simply let the summer of opportunity slip from him.

We do not know if Timothy made the trip in time to be with Paul before his death. We can speculate that if Timothy expected to see Paul he would have to seize his "summer of opportunity" and go to Rome before winter.

Our opportunities are like the seasons of the year. There is the spring, or birth, of opportunity. Then there is the summer, or full growth, of opportunity. If opportunity is not seized, the fall, or fading, of opportunity soon approaches. Finally, there is the winter, or death, of opportunity.

Opportunities unused are soon lost. When opportunities are lost, they are usually lost forever. What are some of the "summers of opportunity" that may be yours today?

This may be your summer of opportunity to be busy in the Lord's work. "Oh, I'm going to get busy in the church some day." When? The pews are full of Christians who consider the church a spectator sport! Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Furthermore, Jesus sounded the urgency, "Say not yet, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

I can't think of any greater regret than that of letting a loved one slip into eternity, having never mentioned Jesus and the church to him. Opportunities unused were soon lost.

This may be your summer of opportunity to rear your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Time can really slip up on us in this duty! Psychologists and others tell us that

the direction a child will go in life is fairly well established by age six.

We cannot abdicate our responsibility to the church. At best, the church can only facilitate what we are trying to accomplish at home. We cannot leave this task to the baby sitter, day care center, T.V., the policeman, school teacher, or anyone else! Far too many Christian parents are now living their lives in regret and would give anything in life to have one more opportunity with their children.

It is a fact that, in spite of our best efforts, some children go astray after they leave home. This, too, causes much sorrow, but it is not the sorrow or guilt felt by parents who squandered their opportunity.

This may be your summer of opportunity to show love and appreciation to those nearest to you. After your parents are gone, rivers of tears and flower bedecked graves cannot bring back the opportunity to show honor and care for them (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2-3). Furthermore, this may be your summer of opportunity to show love and care for your mate (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4), your neighbor (Galatians 6:10; Romans 13:10), a stranger (Matthew 25:35), or an enemy (Matthew 5:44). Opportunities unused are soon lost.

If you are not a Christian, this may be your summer of opportunity to obey the gospel. God's vengeance awaits those who "obey not the gospel" (Romans 10:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-10, I Peter 4:17-18). Obeying the gospel requires faith in Christ, repentance from sin, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ (John 6:29; Acts 2:38; 8:37-39; Galatians 3:26-27). When you are baptized into Christ, you are added to his body, the church (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 12:13). As a member of the church one should serve and be faithful unto death in order to receive the crown of life (Philippians 2:12; Revelation 2:10). Heaven awaits the faithful who "die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13).

Paul said, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter." Sadly, Jeremiah said of his people, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20). There are some things in life we must do now, or they will never be done! Don't miss your "summer of opportunity!"

A Time For Concern



Winfred Clark

It is becoming more and more apparent that there is cause for concern for the church for which our Lord died. He was concerned enough to die for it (Ephesians 5:25). Paul was concerned enough to care (II Corinthians 11:28). We believe it is surely time for concern now.

1. When open fellowship becomes the norm, it is a time for concern. One would have to ignore the real facts in the case to say open fellowship is not becoming more and more popular. When men see no reason to refuse fellowship to those who use the instrument in worship, it is surely a time for concern. The Bible still says, "worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). That surely means in harmony with the truth. That means with the support of the truth. There is no such for the mechanical instrument.

2. When worldliness has a field day, it is time for concern. To oppose "social drinking" is an unthought of thing in many circles. When members of the Lord's body can live like the devil everyday of the week and then think they can come before the Lord in the "beauty of holiness" on the Lord's day, it is time for concern. We are still taught to "abstain from every appearance of evil."

3. When the plea for moderation is called compromise, it is time for concern. Many of my brethren are well aware of the fragmentation and suspicion that rages in this brotherhood. They are raising their voices in real concern. They will no longer have a part in that which will create pseudo issues nor will they have a part in making a hobby of some issue. They will have no part in opposing something just because some friend happens to

Continued On Page 3

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Young Whipper-snapper Preachers And Old Mossbacked Elders

Continued From Page 1

tion's dissatisfaction with him is when he is asked to leave.

Conclusion

Elders and preachers are to be laborers together with God in the task of building up the congregation (I Corinthians 3:9). They are listed together among God's gifts to the church for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for maturing the church into the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). May preachers and elders each consider themselves as helpers, not competitors, of the other.

Let the preacher speak often of his respect and affection for the elders. Let the elders publicly back the preacher in his preaching, especially when he is dealing with difficult and needed subjects. Let each be honest with the other to their face and encouraging and complimentary to the other behind their backs.

Let the preacher speak often of his respect and affection for the elders. Let the elders publicly back the preacher in his preaching, especially when he is dealing with difficult and needed subjects. Let each be honest with the other to their face and encouraging and complimentary to the other behind their backs.

Let every elder and preacher alike put the welfare and unity of the church before his own position, dignity or wishes.

--Magnolia Bible College, Box 1109, Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090.

A Time For Concern

Continued From Page 2

oppose it. The cause of Christ is too big and worth more than this. These men are not about to be intimidated. The cry for "balance" will be heard again and again until we get back to the plea of the Restoration, "In matters of faith, UNITY, In matters of opinion, LIBERTY, and in all things, CHARITY." We refuse to be carried to the right or the left so HELP US GOD.

"In matters of faith, UNITY, In matters of opinion, LIBERTY, and in all things, CHARITY."

--Via Hobbs Street Herald, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Ageless Warning To All Worshipers

Yarbrough Leigh

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, this is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace" (Leviticus 10:1-3).

About fifteen hundred years later, the apostle Paul warned the Corinthians that they not disobey God after being delivered from sin through Christ, as the children of Israel had disobeyed after being delivered from Egypt. He wrote, "Now these things happened to them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:11). Please note: Nadab and Abihu did not die for doing something which God had forbidden, but for doing something which he had not commanded them to do! What an ageless warning to worshipers for all time! We cannot show reverence toward God and, at the same time, show disrespect for his word!

--P.O. Box 26156, Birmingham, AL 35226.

Nadab and Abihu did not die for doing something which God had forbidden, but for doing something which he had not commanded them to do!

The More Deeply He Works The Mine



Bud White

"The most learned, acute and diligent student cannot, in the longest life obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume (Bible). The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the more; new light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct the conduct and illustrate the work of God and the ways of men;

and he will at last leave the world confessing that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance and of their inestimable value."

That statement was made by Walter Scott, one of the moving forces behind the Restoration Movement and his point is well taken. If we are to adequately proclaim God's Word then we must use every means at our disposal. The men of the Restoration spent endless hours in the study of the original languages of the Bible. They were at home in both the Hebrew and Greek. Some today seem opposed to this type of study and education, but we should not forget what the men of the Restoration did because of their willingness to spend these tireless hours in their studies. I am fully aware that one need not know the original language of the Bible to know the plan of salvation nor to live the Christian life. But it becomes invaluable when defending the faith to those who are opposed to the truth. It becomes of tremendous value in enriching the Christian's knowledge of the Bible as well as opening doors that were never before open.

I am convinced that if the uninspired men of the first century or the men of the Reformation or the men of the Restoration were alive and studying

today, they would utilize every study aid at their disposal. Even as great as the works were of such men as Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, or Walter Scott, can you imagine the contribution they would have made if they had been blessed with our technology.

I am a follower of old time fiddling and have even attempted making a copy of one of the old master's works. During the process of learning what, as well as how to do, I have been told by many craftsmen that the old masters made everything by hand. Has it occurred to them that that is the only choice they had. They did not have modern machinery that we have today. Do you really believe that the masters of Cremona such as Stradivarius, Guamerius or Amati would pick up a crude piece of broken glass to shape and graduate a violin if he could use a tool that would do the same job in the fraction of the time? Of course not! They certainly would not have gone to an assembly construction, but they would have used any and everything at their disposal that would have enhanced their work and made it more productive.

As a preacher of the gospel we should have the same desire. We should be willing to spend whatever time at whatever expense to better prepare ourselves to fulfill the obligations that fall upon us as preachers of the gospel. Thus, under the title of this article, for the next few weeks, we are going to "more deeply work the mine." That is, we are going to explore some of the words of the Bible in an attempt to better love and appreciate the Bible itself.

--Rt. 2, Box 475A, Parrish, AL 35580.

We should be willing to spend whatever time at whatever expense to better prepare ourselves to fulfill the obligations that fall upon us as preachers of the gospel.

"Speak Ye Truth"



Curtis A. Cates

Thinking now he had caught the boy, the lawyer replied. "Ah, just tell us how your father told you to testify." Modestly, the boy responded, "Father told me that the lawyer would try to tangle me, but if I would just be careful and tell the truth, I could tell the same thing every time." No longer did the lawyer try to tangle up the lad. (*Gospel Digest*, January, 1960, p. 36).

"Father told me that the lawyer would try to tangle me, but if I would just be careful and tell the truth, I could tell the same thing every time."

What wonderful advice this is for the Christian, whose responsibility it is to ". . . put away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25)!

Christians are people of their word. They keep promises, even "little" ones. And, this means they will be faithful in the greater things (Matthew 25:21). You can depend upon a Christian to keep his promises to men and to God!

Christians are people who "hunger and thirst" after truth. They believe and accept things not because of popularity, or who is accepting them, or what may be said about them if they do or do not accept them but because they are the truth. They do not fear a careful, honest investigation but rather demand it, like the Bereans (Acts 17:11). No one has their unquestioned loyalty and service except the Lord and truth. "Prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Christians are people who abhor and abstain from all false speech and false practice. They know that deception, slander, tale bearing, and lying is from the evil one (John 8:44, 45). Sometimes in one's zeal to support his own position -- even if it is the correct one -- there is the temptation to misrepresent others to make his case appear stronger and more attractive. This has at times been done in debate. Our Lord never once misrepresented His opponent or used deceit in upholding His cause. Job affirmed, "If I have walked with falsehood, and my foot hath hastened to deceit . . . Then let me sow, and let another eat" (Job 31:5, 8). He never wished evil to befall anyone, even his enemy, for it would have been Job's destruction (Job 31:29). Job neither manufactured,

listened to, rejoiced in, carried, nor perpetuated misrepresentation or undermining of the integrity, work, and teaching of others (Leviticus 19:11; Proverbs 12:17).

Christians are people who speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:9, 10). Paul was "set for the defence of the

gospel" (Philippians 1:16), out of the motivation of a pure heart filled with love for those with whom and for whom he labored. Indeed, Paul put away falsehood and spoke the truth with his fellow men, for they were brethren (Ephesians 4:25). The Word still does not sanction doing evil that good may come (Revelation 21:8). "Lie not one to another!" (Colossians 3:9).

--Via Yokefellow, 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118.

Philemon Must Have Been A Good Man

Bill Denton

His slave had run away -- an issue of no small magnitude during his day. Being a man of some wealth and social standing, a run-away slave was probably hard to swallow even for a Christian. It must have stung sharply for the slave, whose name meant "helpful," to have spurned the good graces of this man and fled for freedom. But God so often makes use of situations where we are tempted to throw up our hands in despair. Somewhere along the line, the slave Onesimus heard the gospel of Jesus, obeyed it and became a Christian. It would have been easy to condemn a run-away slave, but what do you do with him now that he's a brother in Christ.

Philemon must have been a good man. Paul counted on that, and wrote a letter, pleading that Philemon exercise goodness toward Onesimus, and welcome him back. It takes a big man to do that. Philemon surely sets a wonderful example for us all. Below are a few items from Paul's letter to Philemon. We could use some of his qualities:

1. He was Paul's friend and fellow-worker.
2. He provided a place for the church to meet.
3. He demonstrated love and faith.
4. He shared his faith.
5. He refreshed the hearts of the saints.
6. Paul trusted him to receive Onesimus.
7. Paul knew that "brother" meant more to him than "slave."

8. Paul counted on him as a partner.
9. Paul was confident of his obedience.
10. Paul believed he would go beyond what was asked of him.
11. Paul wanted to visit and stay in his home.

Yes, Philemon must have been a good man. But think for a moment. Isn't that what the kingdom is for? Doesn't God look for good hearts in which to plant the word? Doesn't He expect good things to come from His people? Yes! And so He looks for those same things in us. We may never have to take back a run-away slave, but we do need to learn how to accept and receive all kinds of people as brothers and sisters. Good people can do that. Next chance you have, look around. See any brothers or sisters you need to "take back?"

--Via Forest Park Newsletter, P.O. Box 623, Forest Park, GA 30051.

We may never have to take back a run-away slave, but we do need to learn how to accept and receive all kinds of people as brothers and sisters.

Could This Be Us?

The sermon had really hit home with Larry as he sat on the edge of his seat, grasping each word the minister said as if each led the way to what he had always wanted. He finally realized a bit with a glow of happy security on his face. "Yes, I will obey Christ and be baptized because I do believe he is the Son of God," he thought.

But, as the minister began to offer the Lord's invitation, people snatched books noisily from the racks and began flipping pages; the sleeping

children were awakened and others put away colors, toys, books, etc. As the minister endeavored to complete his sermon, the hustle and noise diverted Larry's attention and he thought, "Oh, these people are in such a rush to get away, I'll only delay them with my baptism, so I'll wait until another time." So, a bit deflated, Larry stood with the audience as they gazed about, smiling at one another and sang -- "Almost Persuaded."

--Via The Pillar Cave City, Arkansas.

Let's Just Suppose

Let's Just Suppose that you left your wife and family by just walking off and then stayed for three or four weeks without explanation. During this time you neglected your duty to help your wife care for the children, pay the bills and the rest. One day you suddenly come home, take your place at the table BUT make no apology to your wife and to your children. You feel no shame for your behavior and make no effort to repent. What do you think your wife would do?

It may sound silly, but this is the way many act

with the Lord and His church. They miss all or most of the services with little concern for whether or not the work of the Lord is carried on; they bear no sense of shame or any effort do they make to repent. They see no need to repent of their wilful neglect of the assembling of the saints. NOW -- What do you think God will do? Read Hebrews 10:25ff.

--Via The Pillar Cave City, Arkansas.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JULY 14, 1989

NUMBER 28

Truth

Roy Beasley, Jr.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Nothing else in the world has the power to make us free. Ignorance and error will enslave. Only the truth has the power to make us free. The wise man of the Old Testament said, "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). We should be willing to pay any price for the truth because it is the only force in the world that will make us free, and once we have it we should never be willing to part with it no matter how much we may be offered. It should be our determination to know "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." There is no substitute for the truth.

It should be our determination to know "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." There is no substitute for the truth.

Truth in religion can be determined by only one standard. Standards are necessary in determining the truth about anything. We have standards for time, measurement, law and in every other field that you can imagine. Law determines the standard in every field and behind the law is authority. In the realm of religion, God is the authority, and His word, divine law, is the standard for measuring the truth. If we teach, believe and practice in religion that which is not in harmony with the Word of God, it is wrong, it is untrue, and it will condemn us instead of saving us. Jesus Christ settled the matter of a standard for truth in religion when he said, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

It does not matter by what other authority it may be established, it is not the truth unless it is contained in the word of God. The creeds of men may teach it, and the people who accept it may be honest and sincere. The councils, religious conclaves and conventions may legislate, authorize and approve it, but if the word of God does not teach it, it is error, and if it is error it is wrong. The Apostle Paul said, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

There are some very definite obligations which every man owes to the truth. In the first place, Jesus said, that men should "know the truth."

There was a time when God winked at ignorance but how He commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Men are held responsible before God for a knowledge of the truth. It is within the reach of everyone. We can know the truth if we have the desire. We must rid our hearts of all idols; all inherited traditions and personal opinions, and every bit of self-will, and honestly listen to what God has to say in His word if we wish to know the truth. The only man who cannot know the truth is the one who wilfully closes his ears and shuts his eyes to the truth because something else is more pleasing to him. We do not even have to depend upon a priest, preacher or prelate to interpret the truth for us. God speaks clearly and distinctly and He always means exactly what he says,

and we can know what he says without difficulty if we have the desire to know. Therefore, we need to study and meditate upon the precious Word.

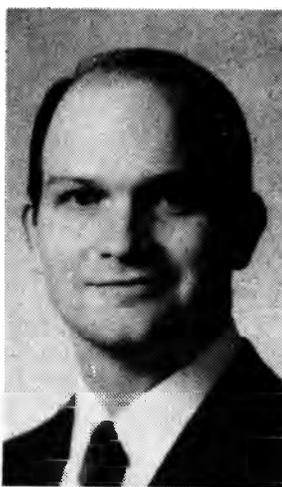
Not only must we know the truth, but must believe the truth. It makes a big difference what a man believes. Paul declared in II Thessalonians 2:12 that those who believe not the truth would be damned.

Then, we must obey the truth. In Romans 2:8-9, Paul declares that God will render to every man according to his works and to them that "obey not the truth" will be rendered "wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish."

What is your attitude toward the truth?

--Restoration Radio Network, P.O. Box 111635, Nashville, TN 37222.

Beware The Mania For Big Words



Dalton Key

marked by long, ponderous words). The dictionary advertises itself on the back cover by boasting, "Now you can move up to a more elegant vocabulary -- with words that sound better, mean better, and let you insult people without their knowing it."

We can be thankful the Bible speaks in simpler, more understandable language than is found in "The Grandiloquent Dictionary." B. C. Goodpasture once observed, "In point of length, the average word of the Bible contains fewer than five letters. What a lesson for the fellow who has a mania for big words."

The brevity and simplicity of the scriptures should serve as an example to those of us who

A while back, someone gave me a copy of "The Grandiloquent Dictionary," a book which catalogues and defines hundreds of lesser known, seldom used words. Among the scores upon scores of entries are: astucious (unusually perceptive), dromomania (an exaggerated longing for travel), and sesquipedalian (believe it or not -

teach and preach from its pages. The world is in desperate need of distinctive messages which are within the mental grasp of the general population. The pulpit - or teacher's rostrum - is no place for strutting intellectual or academic accomplishments to the neglect of simple, saving truth.

The legendary David Crockett, after hearing one of Daniel Webster's speeches, is said to have rushed up to him and commented, "I had heard you were a very great man, but I don't believe it. I heard your speech and understood every word you said."

If communication is our goal, we had best leave off the sesquipedalian verbiage, if you'll pardon the expression.

--P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67905.

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The Gospel Of The Grace Of God

Yarbrough Leigh

Having been warned of dangers attending his journey to Jerusalem, the apostle Paul told the elders of the church of Ephesus:

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

What Was Paul's Theme In Preaching The Gospel Of The Grace Of God?

Let the peerless apostle speak for himself:

"-- I kept back nothing that was profitable, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20, 21).

Farther on, along this same line, in his defense before King Agrippa, he said:

"-- I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but showed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:19-20).

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God Demands Penitent Obedience To God

What we have already presented establishes this Biblical truth, but, should any be contentious, and dispute this; there is more. To Titus, his younger assistant in the gospel of divine grace, he wrote:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Buy The Truth And Sell It Not"



David Wade

and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out, "Wolf, Wolf," still louder than before.

There was once a young shepherd boy who intended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf," and the villagers came out to meet him,

But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help. So the wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said: "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

God places a premium on truth. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). The believability of the truth is inseparably tied to the example of the person who professes to live by it. He must not only speak the truth, but in order to be believed, he must live the truth. Because some do not live the truth, "the way of truth is evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:2). Their ultimate end is eternal punishment (Revelation 21:8).

For the sake of truth, and for the sake of our salvation and the salvation of others, let us follow these admonitions; "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9); "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25). When we cry, "Wolf, Wolf," there had better be a wolf!

To All Mormon Missionaries:

Save to give to Mormon Missionaries at your door!

We appreciate your interest in our souls and your "door-to-door" dedication. You come offering us the BOOK OF MORMON as a "new witness to Christ" and JOSEPH SMITH as a prophet of God. The Book of Mormon teaches in I Nephi 13:26-34 that our Bible is INCOMPLETE -- missing "many plain and precious parts of the gospel" which are "kept back by the abominable church." You allege these parts of the gospel are restored in the Book of Mormon (I Nephi 13:40-41) as translated by the prophet, Joseph Smith.

Contrary to this, the Bible teaches that God, in "his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" in "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." (II Peter 1:3; Jude 3). Since Jude commands that we "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3), we must ask you these questions concerning your book and prophet:

1. Since Joseph Smith in 1832 gave a prophecy in Doctrines & Covenants 84:2-5, 57:1-3; and 101:17, 20, 70-74 that the New Jerusalem and Temple would be built at Independence, MO, "IN THIS GENERATION" -- was he not a false prophet? (See Deuteronomy 18:20-22). Smith's prophecy was given in 1832. 149 YEARS HAVE PASSED - AND NO TEMPLE STANDS AT

INDEPENDENCE! WE NEED NO SUCH "PROPHET."

2. If, as you teach, the Apostle John and three Nephites never died, but remain alive somewhere on the earth today to "prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people" (III Nephi 28:7f.; Doctrines & Covenants 7:3), where are they and why did the priesthood and the "everlasting gospel" need to be restored to Joseph Smith? By this your own Book of Mormon teaches THERE IS NO NEED FOR A "RESTORED GOSPEL."

3. Can you name any "plain and precious parts of the gospel" missing from Peter and Paul's sermons in our New Testament (Acts 2-5, 10, 13, 17, 22), preventing us from obeying that gospel and being saved today? If some "parts of the gospel" are missing where are they restored in the Book of Mormon? No part of the gospel is missing from our all-sufficient Bible (II Timothy 3:15-17), nor is any restored in the Book of Mormon! **THUS WE DO NOT NEED THE BOOK OF MORMON.**

These questions and answers are offered "with meekness and fear" in obedience of the command: ". . . try the spirits, whether they are of God." (I John 4:1). We must reject Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon as being not from heaven, but from men.

--via Defender.

The More Deeply He Works The Mine: Love



Bud White

There are three words in the New Testament that have been indiscriminately translated as love. They are (1) thelo (2) philos, and (3) agape. The first word, thelo, appears two hundred and nine times in the Greek text and is translated love once (Mark 12:38). In this context Jesus is condemning the scribes for their desire (translated love) for public attention.

The second word, philos, appears twenty-five times in the Greek text and is translated as love in twenty-two of those occurrences. However, the true meaning is not brought out by the simple translation of the word love. This type of love deals more with the feelings of emotions than a matter of commitment of or by the mind. John shows the true meaning of this word in three verses in the eleventh chapter of his gospel. In 11:3 John wrote, "Now Jesus 'loved' Martha and her sister, and Lazarus." Then again in 11:36 John recorded, "Then said the Jews, behold how he 'loved' him!" Here the Jews were speaking of the love that Jesus had for Lazarus. In all three

of these contexts the word 'philos' is used and it denotes a feeling of emotions. But the command for us to love God and one another is neither 'thelo' nor 'philos' but 'agape.'

Agape in the noun and verb form appears two hundred and fifty-eight times in the Greek text, and denotes the highest feeling one can possibly have. It is the love affection, good will, benevolence that one reaches through an objective commitment of the mind. It is the seeking of the highest good for the person or object loved. This type of love can only be seen by the action it prompts. Agape is not an impulse from the feelings, nor does it always run with man's natural inclinations. For example, God said, "love your enemies" (Luke 6:27). The word love in this passage is agape. God is not commanding that we have tender affections for our enemies, but that we seek their highest good, that we exercise good will or benevolence toward them through an objective commitment of the mind.

It was this commitment that Jesus was asking for in John 21:15-17. Twice on this occasion Jesus asked Peter for the commitment of agape, for that total commitment that must objectively come from

the mind. It was this type of love that God had for man as stated in Romans 5:8, "But God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Jesus said if we loved him we would keep his commandments. This is the true sign of agape, the keeping of God's commandments. John said in I John 2:3ff, "And hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." Now notice very carefully the statement in verse five, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the 'love' of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." The word translated love in this verse is from agape. How can we know that God is within us? By having the commitment of agape!

Let us pose this question; do we love (agape) God, Christ, the church, and fellow Christians, or do we phileo God and the brethren? Is our love for God deeply rooted in our knowledge of his Word? Is it manifested by faith? If yes, then our love is agape.

--Rt. 2, Box 475-A, Parrish, AL 35580.

Three Kinds Of Givers - Three Kinds Of Giving

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God

Continued From Page 2

(Titus 2:11-14).

Further, to the Athenian philosophers, he said:

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but he now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31).

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God Demands Penitent Obedience

The scriptures cited to this point show that the Holy Spirit revealed it, the peerless apostle believed and obeyed it; and taught it when he preached the gospel of the grace of God, whether to the Jews or to the Gentiles.

To the Romans, he wrote:

"Know ye not that, to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 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" (Romans 8:12, 13).

Let us not pervert the grace of God, making it a cover-up for impenitent refusal to obey the gospel of the grace of God.

--P.O. Box 26156, Birmingham, AL 35226.



Edsel Burleson

Pulpit Helps recently included an article listing three kinds of givers -- the flint, the sponge, and the honeycomb.

To get anything out of the flint, you must hammer it, and then you get only chips and sparks.

To get water out of a sponge, you must squeeze it,

and the more you squeeze, the more you will get.

But, the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness.

Someone has suggested three kinds of giving: grudge giving, duty giving and thanksgiving. Grudge says, "I hate to;" duty giving says, "I ought to;" thanksgiving says, "I want to." The first comes from constraint, the second from the sense of obligation, the third from a full heart. Nothing is conveyed in grudge giving since the gift without the giver is bare. Something more happens in duty giving, but there is no real joy. Thanksgiving is the avenue to real rewards because God loveth a cheerful giver -- giving from a heart of gratitude.

David asked, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). He also said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

Paul asked the Corinthians, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (I Corinthians 4:7). Every Christian needs to search his heart as he asks, "Does my giving to the Lord reflect gratitude to him for all his benefits?"

Giving is life's greatest privilege because it

involves love. It is a privilege to give to those who are the objects of our affections. We shower our children with presents; we express our love to our husbands and wives, fathers and mothers through the medium of giving. In the very same sense, we express our love to God by giving -- not merely our money, but all that we are. This is what motivated Jesus to say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The Lord recognized that the truly mature persons enjoy blessings from the privilege of giving to those whom they truly love.

An anonymous poet said it this way:

The more you give, the more you get-

The more you laugh,

The less you fret.

The more you do Unselfishly,

The more you live Abundantly.

The more of everything you share,

The more you'll always

have to spare,

The more you love, the more

you'll find

That life is good

and friends are kind.

For only What We Give Away,

Enriches Us from Day to Day . . .

So give Cheerfully through the year

And fill the world

With Love and Cheer.

May we daily realize that "every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). Realizing the source of our blessings, let us give our time, money, talents, and influence to him in such a way that he may see we are trying to say "Thank You."

--Via West End News, Birmingham, AL 35211.

Our Lord And Our Faith



Winfred Clark

If you have time to read the fifth chapter of the book of Luke you will find something that is very interesting. In that chapter, in verses sixteen to twenty, we are told of a man who was taken with palsy that was brought to the Lord. They were not able to enter because of the crowd and as a result they let him down through the roof. It is then said, "and when he saw their faith." That is, Jesus saw their faith. Others might not be able to see such but he certainly could. Men might not see faith in the efforts of Noah, but the Hebrew writer was able to do so (Hebrews 11:7). Men would fail, in many cases, to see faith in connection with Abraham's journey, but the Hebrew writer was able to do so (Hebrews 11:8).

Aren't you glad the Lord could see their faith? Isn't that something more that we can appreciate about our Lord?

We can be assured that our Lord can see faith when it is present. He is capable of doing so.

One will be able to see a direct relationship between our Lord and our faith. This will be seen in:

I. His Concern About Our Faith.

Some folks might not exercise that much concern about faith on the part of any person. That would not be true with our Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to the words he uttered to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desire to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:31-32). It is not hard to see the concern Jesus had for the faith of Peter. He would never pray for him if he was not concerned. There was to the Lord a very pressing concern.

There was not only a pressing concern but also a very personal concern. He wanted Peter and others to know that he was personally concerned.

At the close of a parable on the need for persistence in prayer you will find the Lord asking this question, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Doesn't this show his concern? This shows his loving concern for he knows faith is necessary (Hebrews 11:6). Here is not only a matter of loving concern but also a matter of lasting concern. He is concerned whether faith will be present at the end of the age, when the Son of God returns.

One has no problem seeing the Lord's concern about our faith in the verses above.

II. He Is Critical Of Little Faith.

If you will read through the first sixteen chapters of the book of Matthew you will find four instances in which Jesus found fault with what he called, "little faith." These references are found in (Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 14:31 and 16:8). The context of each will explain what our Lord considered to be a "little faith."

In the first instance he was discussing the matter of anxiety about one's finances, food and fashions. That means worry about the everyday matter of what one would eat and what one would wear.

That anxiety reaches the point that one forgets that God provides for our needs. He would thus say such worry is an expression of little faith. To worry in this way shows a lack of confidence in the care that God exercises for his children. It should be very obvious that if God will care for the fowl of the air and the flowers of the field, surely he will care for his children. If one could reason from the small to the large he would see this. If one can see the value of the seemingly small, surely he can see the value of the large.

In the third instance the Lord rebuked Peter when he began to doubt his word and was sinking into the sea (Matthew 14:31). The Lord had told him to come and he stepped out on that word. When he saw the sea he doubted. That is little faith.

III. The Lord Compliments Great Faith

There are two instances in the book of Matthew where he will pay such compliments.

The first is in the case of the centurion whose servant was ill. When the Lord would come into his home to heal him he would say, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). Here is a man that had no doubt about the power of the word of the Lord. He knew such could transcend space and did not demand his presence. The second case is found in Matthew 15:21-28. In each case you find these willing to abide by all the Lord had to say, and their faith is complimented.

--via **Hobbs Street Herald**, Athens, AL 35611.

The Test Of Serenity

Bob Plunkett

Webster defines serenity - "Not disturbed or troubled, calm, peaceful, tranquil, quiet." Jesus told his disciples near the time of his departure, "My peace I give unto thee." Jesus demonstrated in His life the quality of serenity. He never let men drive him into a reaction. He always knew who He was, what He was about and where He was going. He knew He was right and doing the Father's will. He did not have to shout. He was calm. When He stood before Pilate, Pilate said, "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?" (Matthew 27:13) Jesus was calm and silent. He had settled this issue in the Garden of Gethsemane and He knew it was the Father's will and in this He was calm.

How desperately today in this troubled world do we need this serenity. There are so many alarming and disturbing things going on on all about us. There is, of course, the need for action, but it needs to be in calmness. The apostle Paul had this sense of serenity. He wrote his last letter to Timothy from a prison cell. One is impressed with the calmness and assurance of this great man. He said in II Timothy 4:6-8, "I am already being offered and the

time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved His appearing."

Are you nervous, shaky, afraid and worried? Jesus has offered us His peace and let's accept it.

Doris Lagrasse gives a beautiful description of serenity:

- To walk when others are running.
- To whisper when others are shouting.
- To sleep when others are restless.
- To smile when others are angry.
- To work when others are idle.
- To pause when others are hurrying.
- To pray when others are doubting.
- To think when others are confused.
- To face turmoil yet feel composure.
- To know inner calm in spite of everything.

This is the test of serenity.

--via **The Bulletin**, 110 E. Fourth St., Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

How Many Fish Were Caught

Charlie met his friend, Ed, on the street and told him he had been fishing. "How many fish did you catch?" asked Ed.

Charlie replied, "If to the number of books in the Old Testament you add the number of books in the New Testament; multiply that number by the number of apostles who were present at the transfiguration of Christ; divide by the number of books written by Luke; then subtract the number of times the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho. Now multiply by the number of pieces of silver Judas received for betraying Christ; divide by the number of spies sent to look out the land of Canaan; add the number of letters in the name of the city where the man climbed the tree to see

Christ; Then divide by half the number of apostles Christ called. The answer will be the number of fish I caught."

Can YOU tell how many fish Charlie caught?

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VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, JULY 21, 1989

NUMBER 29

The Best Elders

Jack Gray

It has been my privilege to work with some fine elders down through the years. They have served as an encouragement to me and to others. They have also helped to do great things for the cause of Christ.

I have observed, however, that sometimes these men are bemeaned. Questions are raised as to their educational qualifications, their business experience, their ability to handle finances or executive decisions. Back of this has seemed to be the implication that the best elders we could have would be those who are well educated, experienced in business (maybe company executives) and who have had constant contact with the world of finance.

I want you to know that this is not so! Ideally, perhaps it should be; but in real life it does not come across that way at all. Thus, I have learned some things along this line in thirty four years of full time ministry that I would never have learned from a textbook (and perhaps would not have believed anyway). May I share some thoughts with you?

1. THE WELL EDUCATED MANY TIMES MAKE POOR ELDERS. All too often they have come to believe in basing their reasoning on logic rather than on faith. Many of them have come to at least question the foundations upon which we stand. . . not because the Bible is illogical or unscientific; but because of the influence of atheistic professors. Certainly there are exceptions, and we thank God for them. Neither should any elder be excused from trying to improve his grammar or for being offensive to presentation in those who must listen to him. He certainly must know God's word. It is, however, a mistake to look to secular education as a qualification for one of God's elders because it is far more important that he speak the Truth simply than to preach his doubts or uncertainties in the most fluent of speech.

2. THE HARD HEADED BUSINESS MAN IS

NOT GOOD ELDER MATERIAL. Maybe you thought he would be an asset in the leadership; but he seldom is. The Lord's work just can't be operated with the steamroller tactics of big business. This man too often forgets the heart of Christianity. He forgets compassion. He wants to see what the return is going to be on every dollar spent. He doesn't like to see anything given away.

He holds tightly to the purse strings. And, above all, he is not inclined to leave room for God, so he keeps the church from launching out in faith. Simple men with an abiding faith and trust in the Almighty will many times do things and take risks that those guided by business judgment would not dare to take.

3. THE AFFLUENT, SELF-MADE MAN CAN BE A DETERRENT TO AN ELDERSHIP. Seldom does such a man get where he is without making enemies. When he becomes an elder, his enemies become enemies of the church. He is used as an excuse for others not to do right. His very affluence is many times also resented by others. He sometimes has difficulty thinking like the poor. Please don't forget the exceptions, and remember them often in your prayers; but recognize the limitations as well as the assets that such a man can bring into the leadership of the church.

4. THE ONE WHO RULES MEN BY AUTHORITY IS NOT AN ASSET. Isn't it easy to think otherwise? We look to the foreman (who figuratively swings the blacksnake whip) or the man with many employees and we imagine that he would be an excellent man to guide the flock. What we sometimes forget is that such a man may know nothing about how to deal with VOLUNTEERS! He is sometimes at a loss when placed in a position of the shepherd who must go BEFORE the sheep and lead by example, rather than to follow behind with a big stick of authority.

WHO THEN MAKES THE BEST ELDERS? Give the Holy Spirit a man with a simple faith in a

living God, an unswerving loyalty to the inspiration of the Bible and an abiding determination to do right; and he can develop into a good elder. He may have finished college or he may not have finished grade school. He may be rich or poor; have lots of business experience or none; be an employer or an employee. With these things he can still succeed; and without them he should never be permitted to serve as one of God's elders.

--Via Waymarks, Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedford, Texas.

Give the Holy Spirit a man with a simple faith in a living God, an unswerving loyalty to the inspiration of the Bible and an abiding determination to do right; and he can develop into a good elder.

Value Systems

Harvey Porter

Recently news services reported that wine merchant Bill Sokolin paid the highest price ever paid for a bottle of French wine. The price tag was \$510,750. It was believed that Thomas Jefferson may have selected it while serving as minister to France. The bottle had the inscription "Th.J." stamped upon it. It was filled with 1787 vintage Chateau Margaux wine. The wine was considered so valuable that the managing director of a British export house carried it to New York by hand, flying back home the same day. U.S. News and World Report said that Sokolin invited a group of wine connoisseurs to New York's Four Seasons

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

The Red Shoes



David Wade

beautiful pair of red shoes. The poor girl envied her saying to herself, "Nothing in the world can compare to red shoes!"

Soon the poor little girl had the opportunity to buy her a pair of red shoes, just as shiny and pretty as the ones worn by the princess. Wherever she went, people would stop and look at her pretty red shoes. All the little girl could think about all day long was her beautiful red shoes. In the church service, while others were singing, or the minister was preaching, she could not sing or listen to the preaching for thinking about her red shoes.

Then one day something strange happened. When she put on the red shoes her feet were made to dance. She could not stop the dancing, nor could she remove the red shoes. With great effort she and her friends tried to remove the shoes, but to no avail. And so she danced day and night, on and on, and could find no way to stop.

Finally, in desperation, she begged the local executioner to wield the ax and cut off her feet. And as she confessed all her sin, the executioner, with one powerful stroke, cut off her feet, and the red shoes danced away with her feet into the forest.

Hans Christian Andersen tells the story of the little girl with the red shoes. While growing up in poverty, she envied the possessions of the rich. On one occasion she had an opportunity to see the Queen's daughter. The little princess wore a

He carved her a pair of wooden feet, and a pair of crutches and presented them to her. And "she kissed the hand that held the ax."

The story is a hyperbole, but it well illustrates the point that sin leads to slavery and the price of freedom is often higher than some are willing to pay.

However, if we desire to see God, no price is too high. "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slave whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" (Romans 6:16-22).

With similar hyperbole Jesus drives home this lesson in the Sermon on the Mount, "And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:29-30).

Do I "Have To?" Or "Get To?"



Joe E. Galloway

Probably all parents have heard their children both say, "Do I have to?" and "Do I get to?" We know these expressions are worlds apart in meaning. "Do I have to?" shows extreme reluctance. For example: "Do I have to wear it?" means the child does not want to wear it (he would not be "caught dead in it" by his friends!). "Do I get to?" suggests the child does not want to miss it for anything in the world. An example: "Do I get to go with them, Mom?"

Sadly, some grown people show the same aversion to doing the Lord's will by using the identical expression, "Do I have to?" "Do I have to attend every service?" says that we strongly do not wish to come -- that we have other things we would much rather do. "How much do I have to give?" ("to get by" is implied) clearly tells that one would much rather spend his money for things other than the Lord's work. Perhaps it says we rather not give at all!

Several years back we were close friends of some Christian parents who always responded to their children's, "Do I have to?" by saying, "No, you get to!" They were trying to instill proper attitudes. They wanted their children to see that they were

Christ And The Poor

Bobby Dockery

It was said of Jesus during His life here on this earth that "He went about doing good." (Acts 10:38). Nowhere is the essential goodness which was so basic to His nature more evident than in His concern for those who were hurting and His involvement with the poor and needy. Consider some characteristics of the amazing compassion of Christ:

1) **Jesus Identified With The Poor.** Jesus deliberately chose to give up the riches of heaven and to live on this earth as a poor man. (II Corinthians 8-9). When He came to this world Jesus was not born in a rich man's palace; He was born in a borrowed stable with a feed-box for a bed. When He began His ministry, He had no funds with which to

support Himself. The scriptures note that He was dependent in His preaching upon the generosity of certain large-hearted women (Luke 8:2-3). He said on one occasion that while the foxes had holes and the birds had nests, He Himself had nowhere to lay His head. (Luke 9:58). In purely economic terms Jesus had very little in common with the average modern America church member! He never lived a day on this earth with plenty . . . His life was always one of bare subsistence, and sometimes, even less than that! Jesus knew what it was to be desperately poor.

2) **Jesus Ministered To The Poor.** Jesus identified Himself with the misery of others! Repeatedly, the Gospel writers speak of Jesus helping someone

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Christ And The Poor

Continued From Page 2

because He was "moved with compassion." (cf. Mark 1:41). In His ministry, He was especially sensitive to the poor, the blind, the sick, the helpless . . . Jesus began His first recorded sermon by saying that He had come to preach "Good News" to the poor! (Luke 4:18). It is not true that Jesus made no place in His kingdom for the affluent, but it is undeniably true that we cannot reflect the emphasis of Jesus without being concerned for the poor.

3) **Jesus Taught His Followers To Remember The Poor!** Jesus taught in one of His most powerful parables that He will measure the faithfulness of His followers in judgment by how well they have responded to the needs of the hungry, naked, thirsty, homeless, sick and imprisoned. (Matthew 25:35-40). "When you did it not to one of the least of these," Jesus said, "ye did it not to me." (Matthew 25:45). Paul reminds us of the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). We live in a world of terrible dispari-

ties: Christians in Africa and India have so little; the average American Christian has so much! Does God intend for us to enjoy affluence and ease without trying to help our brothers and sisters in Africa and India who face starvation. . .? . . .? Is it right to outfit our children in \$50 jeans and \$80 sneakers when whole families in Nigeria or Ghana are struggling to survive on \$20 or \$30 a month???

Surely, in blessing us so greatly, God intends for us to be a blessing to others in return!! Do we really have the mind of Christ when it comes to our response to the poor?

"Freely you have received," Jesus said, "freely give. . ." (Matthew 10:8).

--Fayetteville, Arkansas

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God

Yarbrough Leigh

Having been warned of dangers attending his journey to Jerusalem, the apostle Paul told the elders of the church of Ephesus:

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the gospel of grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

What Was Paul's Theme In

Preaching The Gospel Of The Grace Of God?

Let the peerless apostle speak for himself:

" -- I kept back nothing that was profitable, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20, 21).

Farther on, along this same line, in his defense before King Agrippa, he said:

" -- I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision;

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Value Systems

Continued From Page 1

Restaurant and while standing in front of the prized bottle he accidentally knocked two holes in the bottle spilling the wine down his leg. The only bright spot for him that day was the fact that he had taken out a policy covering the remaining amount of \$212,000 that he still owed on the bottle of wine.

We are amazed these days what people will pay for something they want or highly prize. We are amazed at what people will give their life to nowadays. Time is our most precious commodity and what we give to it day by day determines how our life is spent.

Some ruin a whole life with alcohol or drugs. Some give their life to overeating or overworking. Some played their life away on their favorite sport or recreation.

We all have value systems. What we value the most in life is what we think about, desire and pursue. It could be evil things or good. It could be things that are neither good or evil in themselves, but they become good or evil by the way we use them or feel about them. For example, work is good, but one should have time and energy for family and God. Money is good or bad, depending upon how we use it and feel toward it.

What do you value the most in your life? Is it a house? A job? Your children? Your mate? Yourself? What we give our time, talent and treasure to, determines what we value most. What do we think about? What or whom do we love? What do we want to do? With whom do we want to be or spend our time with?

It ought to be God, Jesus, our soul, the salvation of others. These are all in the same category of life. They are spiritual things.

The words of Jesus are sobering in this regard. He said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

We ought to value our soul above all physical and material things. We ought to value love and family over job and pleasures that could destroy us and family. We ought to value eternity with the Father and Son over a few days of pleasure and wealth here on earth.

Jesus said that we make a bad bargain if we trade our soul, our real life, for this world. None of us will ever gain more than a small fraction of the wealth of this world; but for the whole world we would have made a terrible trade.

The price tags have been moved around and changed in our age. Half a million dollars for a bottle of wine -- while children starve in Africa! The comparisons could go on and on. And I realize that art and other objects are valuable and prized, but it somehow seems so out of balance, when so many of our fellow humans need so much. What would Jesus do? What would He say to these questions?

I think I know. I think He would say, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33).

--Via Old Paths Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

We all have value systems. What we value the most in life is what we think about, desire and pursue. It could be evil things or good. It could be things that are neither good or evil in themselves, but they become good or evil by the way we use them or feel about them.

Do I "Have To?" Or "Get To?"

Continued From Page 2

blessed with life, with parents who cared, and by being properly trained and restricted with God's word. What they were required to do was to be considered a privilege, not as drudgery.

This same attitude should characterize all Christians! Instead of "Do I have to?" or "Why, or how much must I do?" we should consider our privilege of **getting** to serve God!

Not all people have been blessed as we have by being taught the gospel. Many have not been encouraged by friends and/or family to live for the Lord, as have we. By the grace of God we have been saved, so we can live a life of godliness that "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8). With all these things going for us we should **want** to serve God faithfully and completely!

The Apostle Paul had this right and proper attitude. He realized that, in spite of his former life of persecuting the church of God, he had been privileged to both be saved and to serve as an apostle (I Corinthians 15:9). So, after acknowledging that "by the grace of God I am what I am," he was able to say "his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all" (I Corinthians 15:10). With this attitude we cannot imagine Paul asking, "Do I have to?" regarding anything connected with his Lord's will!

Now, think about this: "Do I have to be at services tonight?"

--218 Pinecrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.

The More Deeply He Works The Mine "Grace"



Bud White

It is sad but true that many of the words in the Bible have lost their beauty in translation. But this is always a by-product of any translation. The problem is the difference in the characteristics of the two languages.

The word grace is from the word "charis" and is translated grace one hundred and thirty times in the Greek text. Probably no other word in the New Testament has been as grossly abused as this word. It has developed into a theology all its own, and it is taught by some as the only element needed for salvation.

The most common definition given grace is, "unmerited favor." I realize that grace carries the idea of favor from God that we do not deserve nor merit. However, this definition does not properly define the word. According to Thayer's Lexicon p-665, the meaning is "that which affords joy, pleasure, sweetness, charm, loveliness, loving kindness." Arndt and Gingrich p-885 gives the definition of, "graciousness, attractiveness, favor, goodwill, gracious care."

In order to more clearly define the word, let's look at the context in which it is used. The first occurrence of the word is found in Luke 2:40 and has reference to Christ: "And the child grew, and

waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." What was upon the child? Was unmerited favor of God upon him or was it the joy, love and pleasure of God?

In John 1:14 the word appears again: "And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." Was Jesus full of unmerited favor or filled with the love, pleasure and loving kindness of God?

This word is used by Paul in II Corinthians 8:1-7. In verse one he talks about the grace of God that was bestowed upon the brethren of Macedonia. This could very easily be interpreted as love, joy and loving kindness. God was no doubt filled with love and joy over the response of these brethren to the churches of Jerusalem.

In Vs. 6-7 the word is found again as Paul encourages the Corinthians to excel and abound in their giving to these needy saints. The fact that they were doing as God had commanded would fill their hearts with joy, pleasure and lovingkindness.

In Colossians 3:16 we are instructed to, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord."

How can this be done if grace is simply unmerited favor? How can one sing with unmerited favor in his heart? When we sing are we not singing from a heart of love in an attempt to be pleasing to God?

Thus we can see that the word carries a far deeper meaning than simply unmerited favor. The grace of the Bible is the love and kindness shown us by God through Christ. This grace can only reign

through righteousness which is by Christ (Romans 5:2). David said the commandments of God are righteousness (Psalm 119:172). Therefore, access to grace only be through the commandments of God. How do I receive or merit the joy, love and pleasure of God in my life? By obeying his commandments.

--Rt. 2 Box 475-A, Parrish, AL 35580.

Probably no other word in the New Testament has been as grossly abused as this word. It has developed into a theology all its own, and it is taught by some as the only element needed for salvation.

Never Let Them See You Sweat

Bob Plunkett

You will recognize this, of course, as a deodorant commercial, but I am afraid it is also a philosophy of life. Don't let anyone see your weakness. Conceal your vulnerability. Make the world think your invincible. Bluff your way through. Along with this we hear at times, never apologize and never admit that you were wrong. What's wrong with sweat anyway? It seems to me that this country needs to sweat again. Sweat helped to make this one of the greatest nations in the world. It is not something that we need to hide or be ashamed of. The only people I know who do not sweat are dead. If you stop to think of it, sweat is a little hard to hide. It tends to pop out all over the body. Maybe this is one of the reasons so many people are cracking up. They try to hide their weakness. Some try to bottle everything up inside. There are times when it might be good just to sweat it all out as it were. Sweat is the process the body uses to cool itself and to remove impurities.

Jesus was not ashamed to sweat. He worked with his hands in a carpenter's shop. It was hot and dry in Palestine. The Bible recorded that in the closing days of his life he prayed and "He sweated as it were great drops of blood" (Luke 22:24). He did not try to hide his deep concern about the cross, death and the weak and frail disciples. The inspired writers did not try to conceal it either. Today he might well have been advised, "Don't ever let them see you sweat." Christians are taught to admit their mistakes. "Confess your faults one to another" (James 5:16). Paul would write to the Corinthians and say, "When I am weak, then am I strong." James says, "God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6). I am also concerned that in our vanity that leads us to glue up our pores we might be stopping a vital and necessary process. Don't be ashamed to let them see you sweat.

--Via The Bulletin

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God

Continued From Page 3

but showed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:19-20).

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God Demands Penitent Obedience To God

What we have already presented establishes this Biblical truth, but, should any be contentious, and dispute this; there is more. To Titus, his younger assistant in the gospel of divine grace, he wrote:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

Further, to the Athenian philosophers, he said:

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but he now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath

given assurance unto all men, in that hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31).

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God Demands Penitent Obedience

The scriptures cited to this point show that the Holy Spirit revealed it, the peerless apostle believed and obeyed it; and taught it when he preached the gospel of the grace of God, whether to the Jews or to the Gentiles.

To the Romans, he wrote:

"Know ye not that, to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 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" (Romans 8:12, 13).

Let us not pervert the grace of God, making it a cover-up for impenitent refusal to obey the gospel of the grace of God.

--P.O. Box 26156, Birmingham, AL 35226.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am no.
Words of Truth.

—speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 30

The Implications Of Rejecting The Literal Days Of Genesis 1

Dave Miller

The assault of humanism upon the American mindset has taken a dreadful toll on our culture. Its atheistic tentacles have invaded virtually every facet of social life: politics, education, entertainment, industry, and yes, religion. The church of our Lord has not eluded its grasp. Evidences of humanistic influence in the church may be seen in the changing attitudes toward morality, authority, worship, and fellowship.

Evidences of humanistic influence in the church may be seen in the changing attitudes toward morality, authority, worship, and fellowship.

One prominent manifestation of humanistic influence in the church is the tendency to make concessions to the Theory of Evolution. Some of our Christian college science professors, et al., have been seduced by pseudo-scientific "proof" that the earth is old, i.e., 4.5+ billion years old. Evolution's survival as a credible viewpoint depends upon an ancient earth. This circumstance has created a climate in the "scientific" community in which those dating methods which support an ancient earth receive preeminence while those which support a young earth are effectively ignored.

Once a Christian accepts the idea of an ancient earth, he is automatically squeezed into abandoning a literal interpretation of the Biblical creation account. He must reject the "days" of Genesis 1 as literal 24 hour days. Historically, in their frantic need to maintain their own credibility as a valid academic discipline, liberal theologians

reevaluated their views of Genesis 1 and altered their perceptions in order to accommodate the evolutionary framework. Consequently, the creation account was stylized "myth" and "hymn." How incredibly naive to think that Christians can use the term "myth" to refer to Genesis 1 and there be no connection with liberal theology, evolution, and a devaluated view of the inspiration of Genesis 1!

What are the practical effects of retreating to such a view? Many older members of the Lord's church were faced with the growing threat of an evolution-based view of science at a time when their own convictions about the reliability and inspiration of the Bible were already crystalized. Consequently, they simply do not understand what the fuss is all about. They are convinced that one can believe in evolution and an ancient earth and still hold to firm convictions about the reliability of the Biblical account of creation.

What they fail to realize is that they had already come to accept the Bible viewpoint and so learned to live with the logical incompatibility of the two divergent viewpoints. Their determination to maintain a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture was formed at a time when bold comparisons with the evolutionary framework were not forced upon them in the classroom.

But times are different. Those of us whose adolescent years have transpired since World War II have been forced to bring into bold relief and stark contrast two clearly opposing viewpoints: creation and evolution. Our irreligious science teaches caused us to face the fact that there is no common ground between the two views. The only reason for accepting the idea of an ancient earth is to accommodate an evolutionary position.

The younger generation is at least genuine and honest enough to see and embrace the logical

implications of the ancient earth viewpoint. Consequently, they have adjusted their perceptions of the integrity of the Biblical text. They recognize that since Genesis 1 may be interpreted rather loosely, so may the rest of the Bible and, for that matter, the whole of their parents' religion. Generated by a secular, humanistic society and perpetuated by careless parents, the children have come to adopt a relativistic view of Christianity. Alarmed, even panic-stricken, parents look on with wonderment at how their children can so easily throw overboard such ironclad certainties as God's laws governing marriage, New Testament worship, and the plan of salvation. They are apparently blind to the fact that they, themselves, in league with humanistic philosophy, have sown the wind that yielded the whirlwind!

The solution? It may be too late to save many of our generation in whom a modern mindset has been deeply embedded. However, the only road to recovery and the only hope for future generations is a return to complete trust in the written documents of the Bible. Let's stop tampering with the text in order to accommodate every fast-talking "authority" that comes along urging us to "get with it." Let's take God at His word. Let's measure everything by the standard of the plain teaching of the Bible. Let's dethrone the god of secular education which has become our measuring stick and absolute authority. Let's re-enthroned the God of Heaven in our lives and take seriously His ability to communicate His view of reality to us in simple, straightforward, easy-to-understand language. If we fail to do so, we should not be surprised if our children have enough sense to see it and live accordingly.

--Via Waymarks, P.O. Box 210667, Bedford, TX 76095.

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)



"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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Faithful



Cecil May, Jr.

believer." The book of Revelation speaks often of faithfulness.

Jesus is faithful. In the beginning of the Revelation he identifies himself to John as "the faithful witness" (1:5), and to the church at Laodicea as "the faithful and true witness" (3:14). Rome is rich and powerful, its empire spread world-wide, but Jesus has promised that his people will overcome; and Jesus is faithful. Christians cannot always see a present victory. Some are delivered from death, but some are "tried," "have tribulation," and some, like "faithful witness" Antipas, die for their faith (2:10, 13). Jesus says, even so, they shall overcome and shall "eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God" (2:7); and Jesus is faithful. John saw heaven opening, and a conquering Judge in blood-drenched clothing fighting to protect and avenge his people. He saw a white horse, he said, "and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, . . . and his name is called the Word of God" (19:11-13).

His words are faithful. "These sayings are faithful and true" (Revelation 22:6). They could only be faithful by being true. That which is not true is not trustworthy or dependable. There is an inseparable connection between any man and his word. Jesus' word is faithful because he is faithful. An errant Bible could not be the word of the Lord. A faithful

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"Plodding Wins The Race"



David Wade

beaten.

While gathered before an audience in the wild, he again boasted and challenged all the animals to a race. After none of the faster animals had accepted his offer, to his surprise, the tortoise said quietly, "I accept your challenge." Immediately the hare began to ridicule and make fun of the tortoise. "Keep your boasting till you've beaten," responded the tortoise.

The course was agreed upon and soon the race was underway. The hare was so fast that he was soon out of sight. And to show his contempt for the tortoise he lay down to take a short nap. The tortoise didn't stop for anything, but just kept plodding on and on.

When the hare awoke from his nap, he saw the tortoise was almost to the finish line. He arose and made a desperate attempt to save the race, but to no avail. Then said the tortoise to the hare, "Plodding wins the race."

In the Christian race, it matters not how fast you can run, but that you stay in the race until you've won. We are urged to ". . . lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our

faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Paul reminds us that in the Christian race, we can all win the prize if we stay in the race. "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (I Corinthians 9:24-27).

The church at Corinth had its share of problems. Among them, they refused to examine self and partake of the Lord's supper in a worthy manner (I Corinthians 11:27-28). "For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep" (I Corinthians 11:30). Paul's message to the Romans was, "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:11-12).

Could it be that many Christians, like the hare, have fallen asleep in the midst of the race? They are not faithful in attendance, giving, evangelism, or to any other aspect of the Lord's work. They are only faithful to their "sleep."

How desperately we need to follow the admonition, "Awake you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14).

One alert tortoise is worth more to the race than a thousand sleeping hares! Let's be awake and alert, ready to use our opportunities. There is much work to be done that will bring glory to His name.

Dealing With Differences

Don Deffenbaugh

One area needing constant attention is our dealing with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. In almost every congregation in the land there are differences among brethren brought on by one reason or another. Differences among brethren are not something new (Acts 15:36-41) but they must be dealt with correctly if we are to maintain "the unity of spirit in the bond of peace." These differences among us arise from a variety of causes and it will be our purpose here to observe a few of

the causes.

We have been divided by doctrinal differences. Because of this there are those who feel that doctrine should no longer be emphasized. One person recently wrote, "I wonder why we can't see the damage done by a constant emphasis on 'rightness' and 'wrongness'." The Bible, however, shows that the time would come when there would be those who would not endure sound doctrine. (II Timothy 4:3). We are to teach sound doctrine. (II

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Dealing With Differences

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Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1; II John 9-11; Galatians 1:6-9). Sound doctrine may be described as that teaching which has Christ as its author and supporter. (II John 9-11). Human opinion is nothing more than human judgment based upon speculation and cannot be taught as sound doctrine. In matters of faith there must be unity, in matters of opinion liberty, and in all things there must be charity. When doctrinal differences arise the Bible teaches us how to deal with them (II John 9-11, II Timothy 2:16-18).

We have also been divided by differences of opinion. If people are doing any thinking for themselves there are going to be differences of opinion. (Acts 15) Many of these differences of opinion can be accommodated. We must be committed to unity in matters of faith and liberty in matters of opinion. These differences must not make us mortal enemies!

When differences of opinion are handled correctly they can be constructive. In the case of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15) there were two trips which resulted instead of one. However, it is also possible for differences of opinion to be destructive. This is always the case when one must have his way at any cost. How destructive it is for one to bind his judgment upon another! No man or group of men have a right to bind purely human opinion (that is opinion held without Scriptural authority established by command, example, or inference) on others. This is exactly the way denominationalism started. Probably more harm has been done to the Lord's cause in this area than in any other. Brethren, don't get caught in the business of binding human opinion on others!

No man or group of men have a right to bind purely human opinion (that is opinion held without Scriptural authority established by command, example, or inference) on others.

As in all areas of human relations there is a problem with a lack of communications in the church and differences arise because of it. Elders often take for granted that the church knows. Preachers take for granted that the church knows and all the while the church lies in darkness. If you want others to know, tell them! Sometimes we fail to express ourselves clearly. There is nothing that will take the place of plain simple language that ALL can understand. Big, fancy, 12-cylinder words have their place, but it is not in the pulpit. Brother Rue Porter often said, "Put your lesson where the calves can get it and the cows will get it too." Preconceived notions, prejudice, etc. on the part of the hearer or reader, often keeps us from communicating. I don't know the number of times people have thought they heard something I did NOT say. There is never a time when it is right to

lie or cover up. Politicians think they have a right to do it, Catholics use mental reservation, but the Christian always tells the truth. Elders get into trouble when they lie and cover up. It is true that we don't have to tell everything we know, some things are better left unsaid, but it is never right to deliberately mislead others.

When differences of doctrine arise the Bible teaches us how to handle them. (II John 9-11).

Differences of opinions should never divide brethren because in them there must be liberty. When differences arise from failure to communicate, the spirit of Christ must prevail. In such cases the teaching of Matthew 18:15-17 apply. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

--Via The Pillar, Cave City, AK 72521.

Some Reflections About The Love Of God

Jackie Stearsman

Proper thinking must precede proper action. Proper thinking relative to religious issues must be in harmony with what is authorized by the Bible.

Today in religious circles, one of the most misunderstood and abused subjects is love. On the lips of individuals the term may portray the loftiest or the lowest of ideas and any facet in between. Men may depict their actions as love but lust would be the correct term.

Some speak of the love of God but the Bible does not support their allegation.

We hear and read such expressions as: "God loves all men the same." Because you are not a Christian does not mean that God does not love you." "God may condemn you to hell but he still loves you." "The only difference between the sinner and the saint is that the sinner is forgiven."

From what some are saying and writing it is clear that many do not understand what the Bible teaches relative to God's love for us.

Misrepresentation will not help us understand our responsibility toward that love.

"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" (John 3:16).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:9-10).

"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. 1:24-33).

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:" (James 1:13).

Observations and Affirmations

These truths follow from the array of passages

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Faithful

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Lord cannot give an unfaithful word. Therefore, his warnings must be heeded; his promises can be relied on. "And he that sat on the throne said, . . . Write, for these words are true and faithful" (21:5).

His people are faithful.. "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful" (17:14). We are not "with him," if we are not "faithful." His faithfulness calls us to faithfulness. He suffered; he was rejected; he was falsely accused and reviled;

eh was put to death; but he was faithful. So we, too, are to be faithful, whatever comes to pass, even in the face of death. Because he is faithful, we are assured that our faithfulness will not be in vain.

The "faithful and true witness," whose "words are true and faithful," has promised us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (2:10).

--President Magnolia Bible College.

The More Deeply He Works The Mine

Hypocrite



Bud White

There is a world of information in many of the words of the Bible. Anytime one word is translated into another language there is a certain amount of meaning that is hidden or lost. Hypocrite is such a word.

Our English word hypocrite is translated from the word "hupokrites" and appears twenty times in the Greek text. Prior to the age of Christianity, the word did not have a negative ethical ring. The word would have to be read in context to determine if it was to be read positively, negatively or neutrally. But under the Christian usage it developed an almost totally negative tone.

The word means, "a pretender, dissembler, a play actor" (Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon p-853). In the classical period it carried the idea of an interpreter, or expounder. It is compounded from the words, "upo" which means, under and "krites" which means a judge. Hence we have "to judge under" or as the actor who "plays under the mask."

Jesus used this word extensively in his earthly ministry to denote those who were out of harmony with God's will, yet pretended to be righteous. In Matthew 6:2, 5 Jesus warned the multitude in the Sermon on the Mount not to be like the hypocritical Pharisees who displayed their pomp and pageantry in the streets to be glorified by men. They delighted in the glory of men to the neglect of giving God the glory. The hypocrisy that Jesus had reference to was the jarring contradiction between what people said and what people did.

Hypocrisy is sin, a sin of deception. It is the failure to do God's will under the pious guise of outward conduct. It can present itself in many different ways or forms. The Scriptures say hypocrisy can be presented in the form of teachers. In I Timothy 4:1-2 Paul said, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrine of devils; speaking lies in 'hypocrisy' having their conscience seared with a hot iron." There shall be times when men shall arise teaching false doctrines and condemning the souls of men and it shall all be done under the guise of truth. We need not go outside our own generation to see the truthfulness of this statement.

In Matthew 23:13-29, Jesus denounced the Scribes and Pharisees by calling them hypocrites. Seven times he attributed this title to them. They were binding heavy burdens on the people, which they themselves refused to lift. It was all done in the name of religion.

Hypocrisy carries the idea of deception and deception is satanic and ungodly. One who pretends to do the will of God and yet is out of harmony with his Word is a deceiver. However, he is the only one being deceived. Let us remove the mask of hypocrisy and proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ and bring our lives into direct harmony with his teaching.

--Rt. 2 Box 475-A, Parrish, AL 35580.

"That's Not My Job"

Author Unknown

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have.

We Show Our Love

Kenneth McClain

WHEN . . . we are sensitive to the needs of others and look for ways to help.

WHEN . . . we become aware of man's suffering and strive to comfort him in his sorrow.

WHEN . . . we withhold judgment until sufficient facts are in and strive to understand one another.

WHEN . . . we forgive those who have injured us and forget about the matter.

WHEN . . . we refuse to speak words that will discourage others and speak words of encouragement.

WHEN . . . we give to others and expect nothing in return.

Some Reflections About The Love Of God

Continued From Page 3

cited. (1) God loves all men, even those who are opposing His dominion over them. (2) Given the teaching of the Bible relative to the nature of God, we know that God is absolutely holy and can not in any way be promoting evil. (3) Evil is foreign to His nature, and he must oppose it or cease to be holy. (4) Man must make the proper response to the love of God. (5) When man refuses to make the proper response to the love of God man forfeits the fullness of God's benevolence. (6) Man must make more than a token response to what his Maker requires of him -- he must continue in the love of God. (7) Those who teach that the love of God is different from doing what God requires of him as revealed in the Bible has not understood God's

love (I John 5:3; 2:3-6). (8) Man may refuse to obey his Maker and find himself in a state where God's benevolence is not available to him.

Conclusion

When we understand the love of God for man we know that he loves all. When we understand the love of God for man we know that His character (holiness) will not permit him to ignore man's rebellion forever.

Men misrepresent when they emphasize one attribute (love) to the neglect or abuse of other attributes (holy wrath).

When we understand man we know that God has given him directives in His Word and that man must comply with these duties if he is to be a

recipient of the fullness of God's benevolent love.

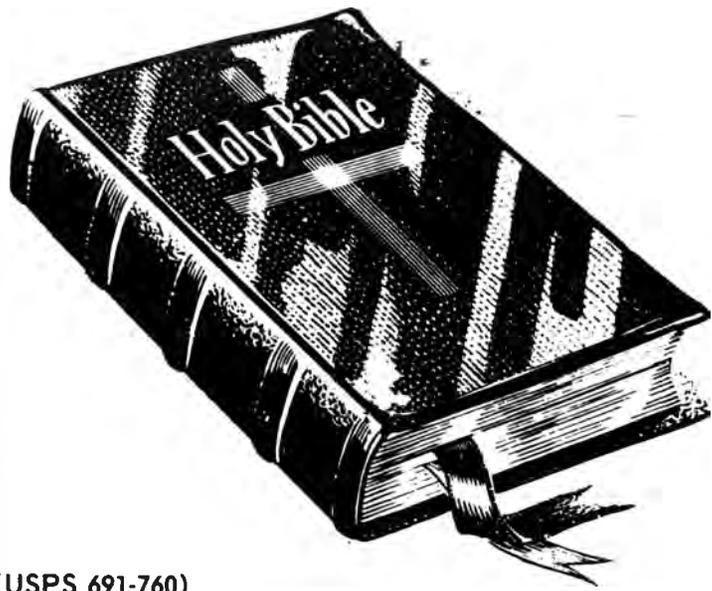
All things do not work together for good to all men (Romans 8:28).

The same Bible that says "God so loved the world" (John 3:16) also says that we must "keep ourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

Does not your Bible say that Jesus teaches "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10)?

Did not John write, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

--Via The Harvesters 1807 South Florida Ave. Lakeland, Florida 33803.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not
Words of Tr

...ness."

...for the

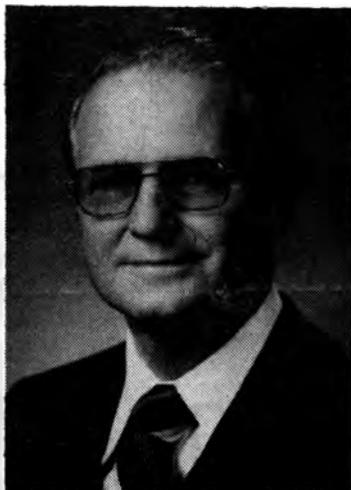
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

AUGUST 4, 1989

NUMBER 31

The Mainest One



Bobby Key
father of Dalton Key, a regular writer for Words of Truth).

(Editor's note: I'm happy to introduce to our readers brother Bobby Key. He served the Miami, Oklahoma congregation as minister approximately 35 years before entering full time evangelistic work. He has also served as editor of the Four State Gospel News for approximately 30 years. He is the

Some years ago in a Texas city a brother in Christ came around on Monday morning almost in tears. There had been a business meeting the evening before. The elders had discussed several things of great importance with the men of the congregation. Two or three things they decided definitely to do. I shall never forget the words of this distraught brother who was not present for the business meeting. He said, "They met and decided to paint the church house when I wasn't there, and I am the mainest one!" I have seen several brethren who acted as if they were the mainest one; however, this was the first I ever heard admit it.

So often in the church there is trouble because someone does not get his or her place of honor. The disciples of the Lord often argued about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. If you turn to Luke's account of the last meal together, you will find the tragic sentence: "And there was strife among them which of them should be accounted greatest" (Luke 22:24). Even at the last meal together, within sight of the cross, the disciples were still quarrelling about matters of position and prestige. They should have washed the Master's feet; however, this would have been an admission of being inferior. At last, Jesus washed their feet. Their dispute as to who should hold the highest office in the kingdom ran throughout the

personal ministry of Christ. The fires of envy were not easily quenched. Jesus told them plainly that they must turn from their personal ambition or they could not be his disciple -- part of the kingdom -- and he pointed them to a little child as the model (Matthew 18:1-9). Greatness does not consist in place. The spirit which proudly seeks to be first in place is usually last in character. The greatest is the servant according to Jesus. The truth of the matter is that we don't know who is the greatest in the kingdom.

In this highly competitive world it is very easy to pay the most attention to the person who is aggressive and full of self confidence. It is easy to notice most the person who, in the worldly sense of the term, has made a success of life. But the most important people are not necessarily the thrusters, and those who have climbed to the top of the tree by pushing everyone else out of the way, but the quiet, humble, simple people who have the heart of

a child.

The church will begin to prosper and grow when we forget about who shall be the "mainest one." There is no indispensable person in the church today. We are simply brothers and sisters in the family of God. We need not look up or down at any Christian, but rather parallel into their eyes. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

--324 17th SW Miami, Oklahoma 74354.

The church will begin to prosper and grow when we forget about who shall be the "mainest one."

"Let Not Sin Reign"



Dalton Key

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

Satan is no friend to man. He uses sin as a deadly and addictive narcotic upon those who will listen to him. His temptations are so appealing; at first

Pity the poor soul who claims independence from God, who believes he is now free, unfettered, his own man. In reality he has done nothing but trade a loving master for a cruel, maniacal tyrant. He has rejected the Lord who died for him and become a slave to the devil who would destroy him.

the sin is so very inviting and pleasing; but all too soon his victims are hopelessly addicted, enslaved, trapped.

Peter described such victims as "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin" (II Peter 2:14). Jesus said simply, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). And the apostle Paul warned, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12).

Of course the devil doesn't tell us this side of sin's story. He has never served as proponent for "truth in advertising." In fact, in short, he is "a liar," in the words of Christ (John 8:44). Satan depicts sin as fun, popular, enjoyable, necessary for happiness. He hides its effects -- guilt and addiction; and says nothing about its consequence -- death.

The devil uses clean, wholesome-looking young people to advertise liquor. He shows them enjoying themselves, having fun, and "living it up." But he never shows them staggering out the door, try-

Continued On Page 3



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Continuous Revelation

Author Unknown

In years gone by, many movements away from the Bible were started by those claiming direct revelation from God. Men became dissatisfied with the word of God, and set out to teach things not found therein. As a matter of convenience, they pretended to speak by direct revelation. Those who retained respect for the Bible considered such pretensions antagonistic to Christ and the apostles. In fact every claim to special revelation is an insult to the inspired writers of the Bible.

Jesus said to the apostles: "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth," (John 16:13). This statement being true, any teaching today that did not come from the apostles is no part of the truth. This verse condemns every doctrine that had its origin this side of the apostolic age.

Some contend that the apostles did not teach all that the Spirit revealed to them, hence those things need to be revealed again. Such a theory makes the apostles guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit. Christ said to them, "The Holy Spirit . . . shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:26). Did they refuse to teach what the Spirit revealed? Jesus said, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). I contend that the apostles were true to the Lord's charge, and that they gave us the truth in its entirety.

The Bible condemns any person or church that presumes to teach more than the apostles taught. Paul said, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). If any angel from heaven cannot add to what the apostles taught, certainly no man

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Poetic Justice



David Wade

one might wish it to be.

There are many other examples of poetic justice in the scriptures. "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7); "He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity"

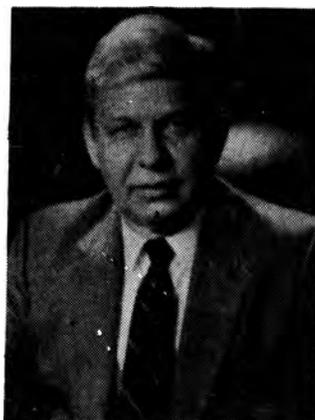
"So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (Esther 7:10). Students of the Word recognize this statement from Esther as a prime example of poetic justice. Poetic justice is the ideal administration of justice, in which good is properly rewarded and evil punished; justice as

(Proverbs 22:8); ". . . whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7); "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made" (Psalm 7:15); "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken" (Psalm 9:15); "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him" (Proverbs 26:27).

Although these pithy sayings are couched in poetry, we must realize that they are intended of God to do more than merely increase our appreciation of Bible poetry. They are declarations of God's justice and judgment of the evildoers.

As Christians, it behooves us to continually search our hearts and search God's word to make sure that in every thought and deed we are found on the right side of God's justice. To do anything less than this is simply a matter of "digging our own grave."

Washing White, Not White Washing



Cecil May

tion and called for no real change.

Jesus used the figure in speaking to the religious leaders of his day: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28).

When an individual or an institution is discovered to be in sin or error, whitewash occurs when the error is denied, the sin is covered up or excused and no penitence or correction is forth coming.

Whitewash is a mixture of lime and water that gives a temporary white covering to that to which it is applied. It is used on fences and outbuildings that are not deemed to be worth the greater expense of real paint. Figuratively, "It's a whitewash," came to be applied to a cover-up, which made no adequate explanation

When an individual or an institution is discovered to be in sin or error, whitewash occurs when the error is denied, the sin is covered up or excused and no penitence or correction is forth coming.

Washing white means washing thoroughly, washing in such a way as to completely remove every blemish and stain.

When we realize sin is in our lives or in our midst, and we acknowledge it forthrightly and turn from it, we are provided by the grace of God with the means to wash our sins as white as snow. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

The difference between whitewashing and washing white is significant. "He that covereth his sins

Continued On Page 3

Have You Become As A Little Child?



David Courington

Perhaps you are familiar with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18 that a man must become as a little child if he is to enter the kingdom of heaven. The account states, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set

him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." (Matthew 18:1-5). The Lord makes it plain that one must become childlike to enter the kingdom of heaven. But in what way?

First, we know that it does not mean childish in the sense of being immature. We have a constant need to grow up and act like adults. I Corinthians 16:13 says we are to act like men.

Neither does it mean to be childlike in knowl-

edge. The Hebrews writer chastised them for being like babies and being unskillful in the use of God's word when they ought to have been teaching others (Hebrews 5:12-14).

We usually hear it explained that this means to become humble like a little child. This is true in a sense, but it needs further explanation. It may be confusing to say that one is to be humble like a child because children in many ways do not show humility. Most of them are selfish and self seeking. As they grow up they want the biggest piece of cake and the only piece of candy and if they do not get it, they cry. They often want to be the center of attention and the "greatest," much like these disciples. This could not be what is meant.

One might get a better idea of what is meant here in considering that Jesus was likely referring to a very small child or infant. The word for child in our text is defined by Strong's as a "childling, i.e. an infant . . ." and by Vine as a "little or young child." The word can be used of an infant just born as in John 16:21, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." The point Jesus is making is that one must be wholly dependent upon Christ as a baby is on its parents. Without its parents it could not eat, drink, or live. It would die without parental care. When one develops this attitude he is completely dependent on Christ for salvation, recognizing his complete helplessness without him.

Solomon used the same comparison in I Kings 3 when he found out he was to be king. He prayed to God asking for help and said, "And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know now how to go out or come in. And they servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (I Kings 3:7-9). God rewarded Solomon for this humble attitude and it is this dependent attitude that we must have if we are to please God. We must know that we have nothing and are nothing apart from Jesus Christ.

It is not coincidental that in Luke's account of Jesus saying "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 1:17), that the verses immediately preceding this give the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke 18:11-12). Here is a man who sees himself as righteous and needing nothing from God. The publican in turn said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13). The next verse says, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:14).

Do you have this dependent, childlike attitude that pleases God?

--P.O. Box 160, Mulga, AL 35118.

Washing White, Not White Washing

Continued From Page 2

shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:7-9).

When sin rears its ugly head, be sure it is washed white. Don't whitewash it.

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090.

"Let Not Sin Reign"

Continued From Page 1

ing to find their car keys. He doesn't show them driving drunk, out of control, destroying the lives of innocent people. He doesn't show them as they turn ugly, diseased, and alcoholic, living from one bottle to the next. No, he doesn't show us these things. In the verbiage of one wit, Satan really "tells it like it ain't." And the temptation to drink is just one of many. Satan uses his favorite and most effective line: "Just this once won't hurt anything." But "just this once" soon becomes "just once more" and "one more time won't hurt" until finally, without realizing it, we've become addicted. Satan has us where he wants us -- in his camp, following his orders.

Only the Lord can break the devil's power. Only through Christ can we be "made free from sin," and become "servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). None but Jesus can wash away our sins, "in

his own blood," in the waters of baptism (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16). And only our Savior can continue to cleanse us "from all sin" by his blood as we walk in the light of his word (I John 1:7).

Because of Christ, "our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

Who would you rather serve?

--Via Old Paths Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Of course the devil doesn't tell us this side of sin's story. He has never served as proponent for "truth in advertising."

Continuous Revelation

Continued From Page 2

can do so, hence all claims to continuous revelation are void.

What John said concerning the last book of the New Testament is true of it all. Hear him, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the Holy City" (Revelation 22:18, 19). If this verse can be relied upon, all those who claim special revelation will be lost in the day of judgment.

Jude said, "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," (Jude 2 R.V.). Since it was given "once for all," no person or church is now receiving it on the installment plan.

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The More Deeply He Works The Mine: "Believe"



Bud White

Of all the words associated with Bible, none is as misunderstood as the word "believe." If ten people were asked to give their definition of believe, no doubt there would be ten different definitions given. The words "belief" and "believe" have taken on a theological meaning and for all practical purposes

have lost their true meaning. When people speak of belief in the realm of religion they are for the most part talking of a subjective type of emotionalism that carries very little evidence at all. However, a close study of the word will give its true meaning and bring to light the proper interpretation of the word.

There are a number of words in the family from which we get the word "believe"; but this particular word comes from "piestueo." It is found a total of two hundred and forty two times in the Greek text. It is translated with various English words, but each one carries the same basic meaning. It is translated as "persuade" in Matthew 27:20. In this context the chief priests and elders have persuaded the multitude that they should ask for the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. It is translated as "trust" in Hebrews 13:18. In this context the writer is closing out the epistle and he asks for the prayers of his readers and he states, ". . . for we trust we have a good conscience. . . ." Intrinsic within this statement is the idea of having been convinced or persuaded.

There is no way to separate the idea of "persuasion" or "conviction" from the idea of believing. The Hebrew equivalent of this term is "amon" which means "to support or nourish." It is translated as "pillar" in II Kings 18:16. As a passive it means one has found "support or nourishment" hence it would mean "faithful" because he is resting upon the support or nourishment he has found.

Let us now make a practical application of this word. When one makes the statement that he "believes" in Christ or "believes" in the church or in New Testament Christianity, what is he admitting? He is admitting that he has been "persuaded" or "convinced" in each of these. To say one is convinced is to say that one has conviction about a certain thing. Suppose the one making this statement refuses to do his part in carrying on the work of the church. He fails to do his part in expanding the Lord's Kingdom. Could you say that he really believes? Would there be any evidence of conviction? To say that one is convinced about something then do the very opposite indicates a contradiction. Many times our actions speak louder than our words. For example, suppose you met a man coming out of a building. He was walking very calmly and in passing made the statement, "This building is on fire."

Suppose you met another man coming out of a

building. He was running and screaming and was very excited. And in passing he shouted, "This building is on fire!" Which one would show the most conviction? If we say we "believe" in the

church and New Testament Christianity, then we must act like it.

--Rt. 2 Box 475-A, Parrish, AL 35580.

Ten Rules For Improving The Church

Joe Barnett

1. Tell yourself over and over that since you are not perfect, you would not fit into a perfect congregation if one existed.

2. Instead of picking out the worldly members to point to, pick out the sincere, dedicated, spiritual members and thank God for them. You will find what you seek.

3. If you are old, treat the young with consideration you desired as a young person. If you are young, treat adults with the respect you will want when you mature.

4. When you are tempted to criticize others, be sure to pray earnestly for them first. This may not totally change them, but it will do wonders for your attitude.

5. When you see a work being neglected, instead of being critical, offer to help.

6. Never, never blame others for your own failure. Every individual can be fruitful in spite of the bad examples and discouraging attitudes of others if he is determined to be.

7. Remind yourself every day that the only way you can improve the world or church is to begin with self.

8. Consciously look for the good qualities in every brother and sister in Christ. When you think of a brother or sister, make a quick mental note of the good points each possesses.

9. Constantly strive to increase your circle of associates in the church. Try to do something good for each.

10. Every church has problems. Constantly ask yourself, "Am I a part of the problem or part of the solution?"

--via Our Reminder, Morrilton, Arkansas 72110.

A Questionnaire For Each Of Us!

Would you be ashamed to see, in print, your contributions to the Lord in comparison to your contributions for your personal interests? When we take a good close look at what we are blessed in earning and see how much we give back of what He has blessed us with, we might not be too proud of ourselves. And then again, many people give so that they can be proud because they give as the Bible teaches. For your convenience, the following form has been provided. Fill it in, read it over, and see if you are really pleased with yourself.

- CHURCH \$ _____
- Coffee, Cokes, Tea \$ _____
- Tobacco \$ _____
- Cosmetics \$ _____
- Beauty/Barber Shop \$ _____
- Ball Games \$ _____
- TV, Stereo, Video \$ _____
- Candy, Chewing Gum \$ _____

- Movies \$ _____
- Eating Out \$ _____
- Jewelry \$ _____
- Clothes \$ _____
- Books, Magazines \$ _____
- Newspapers \$ _____
- Hunting, Fishing \$ _____
- General Recreation \$ _____
- TOTAL \$ _____

How does it look? Remember, Christ gave His life for us!

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Words Of Truth

"I am not
Words of 1

the
5:25

VOLUME 25

AUGUST 11, 1989

NUMBER 32

The Head And The Heart



Winfred Clark

In a class here at Hobbs Street brother William Woodson repeated what brother N. B. Hardeman said about Brother Gus Nichols, after hearing him in a meeting in Henderson, Tenn. He said, "you have the ability to not only touch the head but also the heart." All of us who knew brother Nichols can easily say "Amen." But,

stop and ask yourself just what that means.

For one thing it meant brother Nichols would preach the truth that men must hear on any subject. He would not waver in this respect. There was not a bone of compromise in his body. However, he was not ugly or abrasive in his preaching. He was not in the business of trying to only show men they might be wrong, he wanted more than all else to see them saved. There was no desire on his part to try and win a personal victory over someone. He was not in competition with anyone. He was not trying to elevate himself but rather the Lord who died on that vicious cross. Truly he would preach the truth and that preaching was done in love with the Lord and his word and also for the souls of men.

His preaching was in the mold of his Master. If the need arose to rebuke he could do so. If the need to correct arose he could do so. But, if the wounded of heart needed to be healed he could just as effectively do that. If the discouraged needed to be lifted he would and could do that.

Most of us who preach today are very much aware of the need for this degree of balance in our lives and teaching. When and where it is found, a preacher will find no glee in trying to slay brethren "hip and thigh" with one assault after another. There will be no rejoicing to find a problem to publicize or something that can be made into the "latest issue."

You had better believe a long line of men can be

found who are thinking and saying the same thing. They yearn for the revival of the spirit of brother Gus Nichols in this regard. They are as concerned about the purity of the church as any men could be. They still believe that there are more than 7,000 in Israel that have not and will not bow the knee to

Baal. They believe that number can be increased when we begin to "reach the hearts as well as the heads."

--Via Hobbs Street Herald, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Take A Stand



Bobby Key

Jesus declared, "He that is not with me is against me." (Matthew 12:30) There is no neutral ground in this fight for truth and right. It is impossible to be for Christ and the devil at the same time. Too many people are trying to play both sides. A preacher was asked what he thought about a certain issue and he said, "Half of my

friends are for it and half of my friends are against it, and I stand with all of my friends!" Of course he was joking; however, this expresses the position of far too many of us.

Could it be that we are afraid we will hurt the feelings of some of our friends? Diogenes said: "The truth is like the light to sore eyes. He who never offended anyone, never did anyone any good." It may be that there are times when we are too careful not to offend. John the baptizer fearlessly denounced evil wherever he found it. One never had to wonder which side he was on. He didn't beat around the bush when asked about Herod's second wife. I believe occasions arise when smooth politeness is harmful, and blunt rebuke is necessary.

We need to make our positions clear. The late N.

B. Hardeman once said that he could state his position on any given issue on the back of a postal card and still have enough room to tell how the folks were getting along. I stood on the floor of the U.S. Senate a few months ago and heard a famous Senator speak for thirty minutes, listening carefully to see which side he was on. I finally asked the Sergeant-at-Arms which position the man was taking. He replied that he had heard him speak all day and still didn't know!

Many preachers now-a-days are running around holding up a wet finger to see which way the wind is blowing before standing their conviction on a subject. Such is rather like the man who lived during the Civil War on the border. He did not want to go against the North, so he wore a blue coat. He did not want to go against the South, so he wore gray pants. The only trouble was that the North shot him in the pants and South shot him in the coat! Those who will not take a stand deserve no better.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Many preachers now-a-days are running around holding up a wet finger to see which way the wind is blowing before stating their conviction on a subject.

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25



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David Wade . . . Editor

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Five Plus Five Equals Five

Eddie Whitten

"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." Matthew 25:2

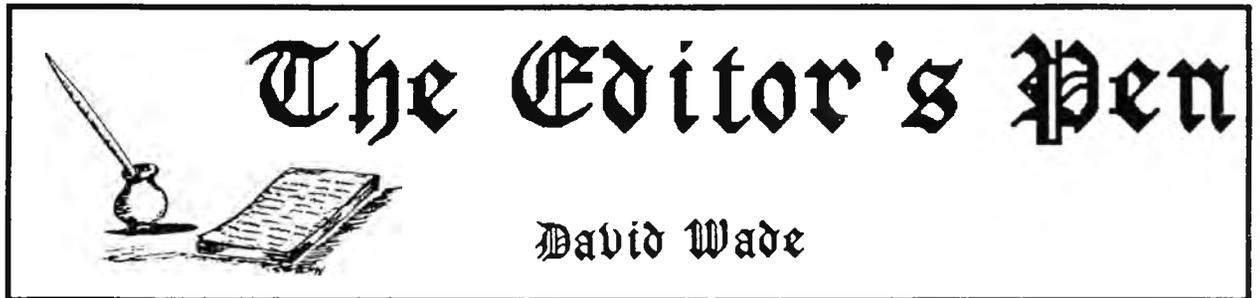
THE parable of the ten virgins teaches a vital lesson concerning the need for preparation. The five foolish virgins failed to prepare adequately for the marriage, and when the bridegroom came they were excluded. Therefore, the five wise virgins were the only ones invited in with the bridegroom.

WHAT was the difference between the wise and the foolish? Both groups had their lamps; both were anticipating the coming of the bridegroom; both were expecting to be a part of the marriage; both were sincere in their desire; both slumbered in confidence while awaiting the bridegroom's arrival; both heeded the arrival of the bridegroom, and both trimmed their lamps. So, what is the big deal?? Just because one group failed to PREPARE for the bridegroom's coming they were excluded.

IN the context of our text, this is a scene of the judgment. Many sincere, honest, spiritual people who are anxiously awaiting the judgment so they can be with the Lord are going to be devastated when the Lord responds "Depart from me, I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23). The reason for their rejection will be because they were not doing the "will of the Father which is in heaven," (vs. 21).

ALL of us know many friends, family and other loved ones who fit the mold of the five foolish virgins. They possess every quality of loveliness and spirituality that one could desire. They are honest as the day is long. They are beneficent, loving, generous, gracious, hospitable and sacrificial. They want more than anything in life to go to heaven when they die. What, then is the concern? **BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT MADE THE PREPARATION GOD REQUIRES!** When the Bible says "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," it does not mean "He that believeth shall be saved." Like the foolish virgins, they have omitted that one little matter that stands between them and salvation!

DOESN'T it make sense to do what the Lord commands? Why wait another day? Obey the gospel according to Romans 6:3-6 and be saved TODAY, before the bridegroom comes again!



David Wade

Leadership Selection



David Wade

In each succeeding generation the Lord's church faces the continual challenge of preparing, selecting, and appointing qualified leadership. The task is not always easy nor the best way always apparent; nevertheless the church must band together and put forth her best efforts to appoint leaders.

Often, questions arise about procedures to be used in the selection process. The following article from Questions and Answers, Volume 2, pp. 199-200 brother Guy N. Woods addresses these matters and is here printed in its entirety.

"Does the eldership of a local church possess the character of a self-perpetuating board? more specifically, does such an eldership have the exclusive power to select other men to be considered as elders, and to determine the validity of any scriptural objections raised by any member of the congregation?"

There are actually two questions involved here: (1) Is the eldership a self-perpetuating board? (2) When additional elders are being appointed does the eldership have the right to "determine the validity" of the objections offered to the men being considered? The answer to the first question is an unqualified "No!" The second question must be answered with a qualified "Yes."

While there is very definite and clear evidence of the appointment of elders in the apostolic church, details of procedure are not given. Paul and Barnabas "ordained" elders in the communities of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (Acts 14:21-23), and Titus was instructed to remain in Crete to ordain elders in all the cities of the island (Titus 1:5), but there is no prescribed rule for the accomplishment of this end in the instances given. It is far from correct to say, however, that we are without divine direction in this matter; on the contrary, there is clear and positive information touching the Spirit's will in this important aspect of church work. Once we learn what was the Lord's will in the matter of selecting any man, or group of men, in the performance of church functions, we may properly conclude that such is his will in other comparable areas, though no specific rule is provided.

Luke, historian of the early church, gives us a detailed description of the selection and appointment of deacons in the Jerusalem congregation. We direct special attention to the fact that there were two actions -- not one -- involved: the selection by the people preceded, and differed from, the appointment by the apostles. "In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there

arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, . . . whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:1-3) If ever a situation existed where it appeared proper for apostles arbitrarily to choose the men and appoint them, it would seem to be so here; the apostles were all present; their authority was unquestioned and their selection would have been infallible. Notwithstanding, the multitude of disciples made the selection, and this by divine decree. This, then, is the apostolic mode and must not be dispensed with. May we not thence conclude that the right of those to be overseen to select the men whom they believe to possess the necessary qualifications to be elders is inherent and that if the apostles were precluded from such, that an existing eldership would have reserved to it no such powers?

To the question, May an existing leadership determine the validity of any objections offered to additional men proposed for the eldership? the answer is a qualified "Yes." Because the elders watch for the souls of the saints (Hebrews 13:7, 17), and are over them in the Lord, it is quite obviously their responsibility to the congregation to examine with closest scrutiny those suggested. But, this responsibility is neither exclusive nor is it limited to the eldership; it is the responsibility of all knowledgeable members of the church, as individuals thus including the elders as such, to determine the fitness of those proposed to serve as overseers of the flock, such fitness to be ascertained on the basis of the qualifications set out in detail in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

The Things We Give Away

When we give away a flower
It's fragrance stays behind
Like a special little "Thank You"
For doing something kind.

When we give away a pleasant word
To cheer someone's distress,
The glow of it remains with us
To bring us happiness.

When we give away a loving smile
To lighten someone's heart,
Our own is always lightened
By the love we impart.

In fact, the sweetest things of all
That bring us joy each day
Are not the ones we try to keep
But those we give away.

--Selected

Church Problems In The Twenty-First Century



W. A. Holley

changes which may occur. Such anticipation may spell the difference between success or failure.

Although this scribe does not claim to be a prophet, nor the son of a prophet (cf. Amos 7:14), it is possible, from past history and the teaching of God's holy word, to gain some insight into what the future holds in store for the years to come. We claim no psychic powers, nor do we possess a crystal ball which could declare a correct reading of the many problems that may arise in the years immediately ahead.

Commending Ourselves

John Gipson

There is an old saying which runs, "He that tooteth not his own horn, the same shall not be tooted." So when others fail to boast of our accomplishments we are tempted to stand up and shout, "I'm the greatest." But, of course, that's not considered very good form. Even when others praise us it can be a dangerous thing. In the words of Homer:

Praise me not too much,

Nor blame me, for thou speakest to the Greeks
Who know me.

The apostle Paul did not hesitate to commend himself, but he did it in a most unusual way. He permitted the grace of God to be displayed in his life through the things that happened to him. He endured afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching and hunger (II Corinthians 6:4, 5). These were conditions that couldn't be sidestepped. They had to be borne patiently, and Paul, through endurance, commended himself.

What about the conditions which we must bear patiently? Maybe it has to do with physical suffering. Maybe there is a desperate need and you do not know how to meet it. What about a work load which seems too great? What about opponents who seek your injury? Will your conduct commend you?

As you stand on the platform of life, can you commend yourself through purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God? (II Corinthians 6:6).

If you can commend yourself in such ways as these, you have not received the grace of God in vain.

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

It is no sin to try to anticipate some of the problems and situations which may arise. Business men endeavour to foresee any difficult trends that might arise. All colleges and universities are very interested in what the coming years may bring. National and local government would profit wonderfully from knowing of the

We claim no psychic powers, nor do we possess a crystal ball which could declare a correct reading of the many problems that may arise in the years immediately ahead.

The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 47; 11:15; Colossians 1:13-14). Shortly after its establishment it began to suffer from sundry persecutions, as the Book of Acts reveals. Read Acts, chapters 3 through 9, and you will see many efforts to banish the Lord's church from the face of the earth. Saul of Tarsus was one of its greatest enemies.

During the first century the church was warned of dangers to come. Paul spoke of attacks upon the divine government of the church (Acts 20:28-31). "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . ." (I Timothy 4:1-3). "For the time will come when I will not endure sound doctrine. . ." (II Timothy 4:1-8). And false teachers would arise (I John 4:1-5). Thus, persecutions, apostasies, famines, and opposition from the Roman government, represent but a few of the obstacles which confronted the early Christians.

What are some of the problems which may confront the Lord's church in the years bringing us into the twenty-first century?? For your consideration, we suggest the following thoughts.

(1) There will be much stiffer competition from the powers of entertainment. These powers are almost unyielding and unalterable as they attempt to sway the average person. Television, satellites, fishing trips, and vacations of all sorts now keep countless thousands away from the house of the Lord (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10). There must be a renewed dedication to serve the Lord without compromise of truth (Ecclesiastes 9:10; I Corinthians 16:13-14).

(2) Vast propaganda machines will be unleashed in an all-out effort to popularize the church of Christ. In fact, these voices are now being heard in many circles. These voices tend to drown out the voice of truth. Even now, the Lord's church must take advantage of every legitimate means by which it can keep itself in the public eye. The "gates of hell" cannot destroy the church of God (Matthew 16:18-19). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31; cf. Numbers 14:9; Psalms 118:6). Denominationalism and Roman Catholicism may spend millions, but they cannot destroy that church built by the Lord Jesus Christ!!

(3) As the years come, we shall need better educated preachers, more efficient elders, more effective teachers, and a better disciplined membership. Whether we like nor not, the general public is going to be more highly educated. Those who visit the services of the local church of Christ will not be satisfied to hear some illiterate make a fool of himself. It may be, in the years to come, we shall be forced to truly educate our own in the things of the Lord, rather than depend upon the public schools to do it for us.

(4) As we approach the twenty-first century, greater and greater sums of money, time, and

effort, are being spent in promotional programs, in support of religious projects. The church of the Lord will need to command the greatest vision possible, if it hopes to grow and prosper. That church with no vision can hardly succeed! We should, as Jesus said: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:34-35). We shall need better-equipped buildings, in better locations, where the people can assemble for worship, vacation Bible schools, singing schools, and the like. Winston Churchill said, "The farther back you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see." (cf. Philippians 3:12-14).

(5) We will need to overcome our fears, anxieties, worries, and must add to our efforts courage, boldness, and zeal for the work of the Lord (Titus 2:14; Revelation 3:19). It is past time for us to launch out into the deep, overcome our reticence, and march onward toward victory.

(6) Greater efforts will be made to blur that line that separates truth from error. Even now many within our ranks are ready to tolerate almost anything! In the minds of thousands there is no such thing as truth: Every thing and every body is right! (cf. Romans 3:3-4). Some think that others' views should not be criticized. Jesus contended that "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17; cf. 8:30-32). Jesus and other inspired men condemned the views of false teachers (Matthew 15:10-14; Mark 7:1-13; Acts 13:4-12). Can faithful followers of the Lord afford to do less? (Philippians 1:17; Jude 3).

(7) As we approach the twenty-first century, there will be greater efforts to obtain public funds for religious purposes. Many are deeply interested in removing any boundary between separation of church and state. Efforts in that direction are now being pushed in the United States Congress. Do you want a state-run and state-operated religion? The Constitution now prohibits such; but many want that changed (Mark 12:13-17; cf. Luke 20:19-26). A slight crack can result in a flood!

(8) As greater numbers are brought into the church, we must make certain of their indoctrination. We must teach . . . teach, and teach them again -- and again (Matthew 28:18-20). Many church problems stem from a lack of teaching (Hebrews 5:11-14; I Peter 2:2). Christian examples are always needed (Matthew 5:16).

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Bring Those Babies To Church

Mike Schneider

My heart goes out to the parents of small children. I know first hand the kind of problems they face (and my wife knows even better). Training up a toddler in the way he should go is a constant job, a continuous battle, a seven-day-a-week task, not to mention an awesome responsibility. After six days of their whining chorus at home and three hours of embarrassment while shopping, the last thing some young mothers want to face is an hour of agony and humiliation at church.

Many a young mother has asked herself, "Why do I keep bringing them to church?" As she enters the auditorium she utters a silent prayer that the kids will be good and the sermon short. The service begins. While mother is picking up toys, drying eyes, wiping noses, swatting, scolding, going out, coming in, and trying to sing, listen, and pray, the toddler is pouring juice on her dress and pulling a

Continued On Page 4

A Land With Many Things Missing



Edsel Burselson

Chapters twenty-one and twenty-two of Revelation give a lengthy and beautiful description of heaven. The language is designed to stir our hearts, arouse our interest and to cause us to desire to go there no matter what the cost. But in studying these two chapters it is evident that numerous things are missing in heaven and it is evident they are missing by God's design. God does not want them there and will not allow them there. It is their very nature that keeps them out.

John declares that death, mourning, crying, pain and curse will all be missing from heaven. "And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). "And

Bring Those Babies To Church

Continued From Page 3

button off of the man serving the communion. To the toddler, church is an exciting adventure. Song books are a challenge to tame, stuffed toys make great missiles to launch over four or five rows, and the collection plate would make a great hat!

Most young couples don't mind the distraction themselves nearly as much as they worry about the distraction to others. It seems that all around are the staring, critical eyes of those who raised "perfect" children. As they glare down their noses through pursed lips they seem to be thinking, "When my children were that age they sat still and quiet during church and allowed others to truly worship." At least, that is what it seems like they are thinking.

Young parents, take heart! Allow me to assure you of six things. (1) Your children do not disturb others nearly as much as you think they do. (2) If people without children are determined to sit at the back (where most small children sit) then they deserve any distraction they get. (3) Most people really do understand your plight and remember back to the days when their children were infants and toddlers. (4) Through proper discipline and early training your children will soon learn how to behave properly. When they do begin to show signs of improvement, move down closer to the front where you and your children will feel more a part of the worship. (5) Remember that you are both wanted and needed in the worship service. (6) Have faith that the hand which now hurls the crayons will one day spread the seed of the Kingdom.

--Lamesa, TX.

Have faith that the hand which now hurls the crayons will one day spread the seed of the Kingdom.

there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads" (Revelation 22:3, 4).

The sun, night and artificial lights will all be missing. "And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sin; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:5).

John also says hunger, thirst, loneliness and tears will be missing. "They shall hunger no more, neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:16, 17).

In spite of the absence of all of these undesirables in heaven, the greatest of all is actually living in the presence of God. All questions about God will be answered. We will dwell in his light forever and ever. "The tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them" (Revelation 21:3).

F. H. Lehman, in a song entitled "No Disappointment In Heaven" gives a significant

How To Tell Right And Wrong

Douglas F. Parsons

The minutes of the church business meeting told the story. It was reported that on January 25, Amos Perkins, a church member, had been seen going to a movie. Amos was brought before the church for this "heinous crime" as the minutes put it, and after arguing over whether the witness of a non-church goer could be accepted, the men publicly rebuked Amos. All of this is in the minutes of a rural Baptist church in middle Tennessee dated in the year 1931.

In many areas of life today, issues arise that contain a mixture of rightness and wrongness. Few issues today come as choices between absolute good and absolute evil. They come checkerboarded with shades of gray, (areas of moral ambiguity where to choose either way inevitably hurts someone else). Are there any rules which can nudge us a bit in the direction of the right? After all, many moral issues arise which are not specifically mentioned in the Bible so we are required to do what many Christians don't like to do -- use our heads. Here are some questions you might ask to help you make up your mind.

1. What would Jesus do? Charles Sheldon wrote a novel proposing the idea that many of us who face an ethical dilemma can solve it by simply asking, "If Jesus were in my place right now, what would He do?" Of course, the question assumes we know Him well enough, that we can decide what He would have done.

2. What would happen if everyone did what I'm about to do? This question is especially helpful and important as we consider opportunities to cut

picture of things God will not allow in heaven.

"There's no disappointment in heaven,
No weariness, sorrow or pain;

No hearts that are bleeding and broken
No song with a minor refrain;

The clouds of our earthly horizon

Will never appear in the sky,

For all will be sunshine and gladness,

With never a sob nor a sigh.

"We'll never pay rent for our mansion,

The taxes will never come due;

Our garments will never grow threadbare,

But always be fadeless and new;

We'll never be hungry nor thirsty,

Nor languish in poverty there,

For all the rich bounties of heaven

His sanctified children will share.

"There'll never be crepe on the door knob,

No funeral train in the sky;

No graves on the hill-sides of glory,

For there we shall never more die;

The old will be young there forever,

Transformed in a moment of time;

Immortal we'll stand in his likeness,

The stars and the sun to out-shine."

--Via West End News, Birmingham, AL 35211.

the corners of honesty and integrity. The very fabric of our society is woven with the cloth of trustworthiness. Truth is the standard that makes the world work.

3. Would I be willing for my best friend or closest loved one to know about this? As long as we can be sure that we are acting and living in darkness, we are tempted to one set of values. But what if everyone knew and saw this thing? The real test of a person's character is in what he or she does when no one else is looking.

4. Does my doing this cause anyone else to stumble or be hurt? There are many actions that might very well cause no harm at all to us individually. But where do the ripples finally go? Francis Thompson once wrote that we "cannot stir a flower without troubling a star," so tied together are we all.

5. Will it bother my conscience? God has given us built-in alarms to warn us against evil -- the conscience -- but the conscience has to be educated and trained. Someone has noted that if some of us had our consciences taken out, it would be a very minor operation. But the fact remains that most of us know, right clearly, whether an action is right or wrong because of that still, small voice that stirs us.

Five suggestions may help if you are genuinely perplexed about the rightness of an action. Then our problem becomes not knowing but doing. And in the election that decides the doing, there is only one vote.

--Via Airline Church of Christ, L.A.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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The Whole Duty Of Man



Bobby Key

In the last lines of the last book written by the wise man, Solomon, these inspired words occur, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into

judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14). Man has no higher duty than his obedience to God. Everything else is second. He may have a duty toward his family, his fellow-man, his country; but his whole duty is to fear God and keep his commandments. No matter in which age man has lived, whether it be the Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian, God has always required obedience. God's attitude toward sin and righteousness, obedience and disobedience never changes. Man often changes but God never does change. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (Psalm 102:25, 26). For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). From the beginning God has demanded three things in order that man please Him: These three things are faith, repentance and obedience. God has always rewarded obedience and punished disobedience. There is no exception. Under the law of Moses "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." How in the name of reason do we expect to escape if we neglect the great salvation in Christ? We must learn obedience or suffer the consequence.

We often make a mistake in our writing and preaching. We take much time in trying to tell

sinners what to do to be saved when they do not want to be saved. It really requires more teaching to get people in the notion of being saved, than it does to show them how to be saved. Telling men about hell, heaven, death, sin, and judgment does not show them how to be saved; but it causes them to want to be saved. When men want to be saved, they will do the commandments of God. When men realize they are lost they will seek one to guide them. God through His Word is that perfect guide. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). We have been placed in life's way, and it is folly to trust ourselves for guidance. We are strangers to the road we travel. We have not passed this way before, and we need a guidance above our own, that we may keep our feet in the way everlasting. The great Guide has given me the Bible which "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 109:105).

It really requires more teaching to get people in the notion of being saved, than it does to show them how to be saved.

There is a reason for fearing God and keeping his commandments. There will be a day of judgment and every soul shall stand before God to give an account of himself. God, the infinitely wise, the heart-searching creator, will be the judge and he will bring to light every secret thing -- all that has been done since the creation, by all men, whether forgotten or registered; whether done in secret or in public. Every deed, whether good or evil, will have its own proper, eternal result. This should be reason enough for doing the will of God.

We don't want to live in this wicked, troubled world forever. It is a world of sickness, suffering, death and disappointment. It is a world of misunderstanding, remorse, storms, tempests, tears and woes. Paul said, "O wretched man that I

am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). Now, if you long for a land of unending delight; a place of rest, "where they count not time by years," you will want to do the Lord's will. One who really loves the Lord will gladly repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). May I remind you that the weary march of life will soon be over. All who are prepared will soon be at home with the Lord. You are now living in a day of opportunity and hope. Today is the day of salvation. Do not let it pass. Hear, believe, and obey the gospel; so that when death comes, angels can bear your soul safely into the Everlasting arms of our God.

--324 17th SW, Miami, Oklahoma, 74354.

Lost

Roy Goodmiller

"The loss of wealth is much;
The loss of health is more;
But the loss of Christ is such a loss
That no man can restore."

Someone else has written; "Sheep get lost, not because of the thicket, but because they wander away too far from the shepherd."

When the late Adlai Stevenson ran for President of the United States and lost to General Dwight Eisenhower, he said after the election, "I feel like the little boy who stubbed his toe; I'm too old to cry, but it hurts too much to laugh." It always hurts when we stop to realize that most of the world will be lost eternally, and we can do so little about it. It hurts when we realize that most of the world will be lost eternally, and we can do so little about it. It hurts when we realize that some are "not far from the kingdom;" and we can't persuade them to be "altogether as I am," Acts 26:29. It hurts when we realize that there are so many in the church who were "once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift," Hebrews 6:4, and yet have turned their backs on the Lord and serve Him no more.

A very wise writer said concerning those who fall away, "Someone asks why so many church members fall. Here's one answer in a parable. When a boy was asked why he fell out of bed, he replied, 'I guess it's because I stayed too close to the getting-in place'."

--Via Our Reminder Morrilton, AR 72110

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Lessons From Acts 10

Clifford Dixon

In this chapter we have the conversion of the first Gentile to Christianity. The person God gave this opportunity to was a great man who already believed in God, but who needed the words of the gospel whereby he and his house could be saved. Peter is the spokesman who was told by Christ that he, along with the other apostles were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:18, 19; 18:18). Let us notice some things about this man's conversion that stands out.

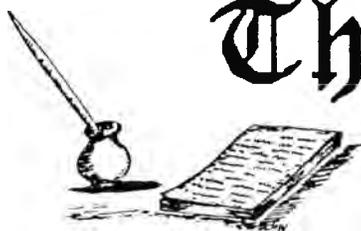
1. He was a **PROMINENT** man. He was a Centurion, which was a leader in a Roman cohort which could have been 1,000 men. This band was Italian so they were Romans. He was a leader with humility that is worthy of our emulation. The people thought a great deal of him because his servants explained that he was "of good report among all the nation of the Jews" (Acts 10:22). This is saying much of a Gentile, but in spite of this he needed the truth of the gospel so he could believe in and obey Christ, and have the remission of sins (Acts 10:43, 47, 48).

2. He was a **PIOUS** man, which means that he was devout, being devoted to religion and religious duties. He feared God, which is a characteristic all need (Matthew 10:28). He was a giver to help the needy, and a man who prayed to God and worshipped God. When the angel appeared to him he was observing the Jewish hour of prayer, so he worshipped God under what ever light he had from the Mosaical law, having learned it from the Jews. Being very religious doesn't mean that a person is saved because it is the truth that makes men free (John 8:32).

3. He was a **PHILANTHROPIC** man in that he believed in helping the needy. Pure religion requires that one visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction (James 1:27). God is a judge of the fatherless (Psalm 10:18), and a father to the father-

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The Editor's Pen



David Wade

"The Truth Shall Make You Free"



David Wade

Jesus declares that truth makes us free (John 8:32). However, he predicates freedom on our knowing the truth. "Ye shall KNOW the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This principle has application in every realm of life: spiritual, secular, scientific, legal, political, medical, or whatever. Truth in every realm leads to freedom. It is all the more important that we study God's record of spiritual truth, the Bible, in order that we, by it, may be made spiritually free.

The Bible is replete with examples of those who failed in this endeavor. The experiences of Paul in dealing with false teachers and their false ways graphically illustrates the bondage of falsehood. "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:18-20).

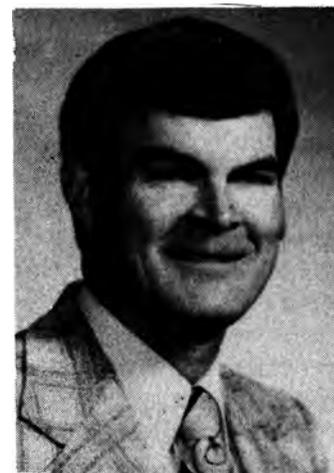
Although Alexander faded from the scene, the evil work of Hymenaeus continued. Paul further charged Timothy: "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymanaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His, and, let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (II Timothy 2:15-18).

As a servant of Jesus Christ, Paul had no choice but to confront the error and expose it. To do anything less than this places "truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne" (James Russell Lowell). Paul further admonishes: "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord

must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taking captive by him to do his will." (II Timothy 2:23-26).

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:2-5). "The truth shall make you free."

Modesty



Ray Hawk

Scripture

"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God" (I Timothy

2:9-10 NIV).

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes" (I Peter 3:3 NIV).

Introduction

According to Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, "baptize" means, "to dip . . . christen" (Page 69). With the passage of time, words change from their original meaning. If we want to know what baptism means in the Bible, we must see what it meant to first century writers. The word baptize is from *Baptizo* meaning to "dip, immerse" (Arndt-Gingrich, page 131). "Immersion" fits the English word "buried," found in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12, more so than does sprinkling or pouring of water on the head of someone.

In like manner, if we are to understand the word

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Modesty

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"modesty," we must see what it meant to first century writers. What was the "modest apparel" Paul spoke of in our text?

Both Paul and Peter condemn "braided hair." Both condemned the excessive use of gold, pearls, or expensive clothes. New Testament writers condemned excessiveness in dress or jewelry as immodesty.

The word "modest" is from the Greek word kosmos.

It means "respectable, honorable . . . in modest apparel" (Arndt-Gingrich, page 446). The word is found twice in the New Testament. Once in our text and in I Timothy 3:2, rendered as "of good behaviour." To see what modest meant in the first century, we must look at what women wore in Ephesus where Timothy was laboring (I Timothy 1:3). Keep in mind that a woman usually wore a dress that covered her arms, legs, ankles, and feet. She also wore a covering or veil in public places (I Corinthians 11:5). When Paul wrote to Timothy, the problem was not with women taking off any of these items, but in addition, braiding their hair with gold or pearls and wearing of expensive garments. Such conduct was excessive and therefore immodest.

How Some Have Interpreted This

Some have thought the Holy Spirit was condemning any woman who put on makeup or wore any kind of jewelry. That was not the case. Excessiveness is condemned in the Bible, not moderation (Philippians 4:5). Excessiveness draws attention to the person, not to godliness. The Spirit wanted Christian women to attract others with their godlike character, not their excessiveness.

When people dress in such a way as to draw

attention to their dress, they fit the condemnation of Paul, Peter, and the Holy Spirit. For example, there are people today who dress differently because they do not want to be like the world. Yet, the type of dress they wear draws undue and unflattering attention to them. Catholic priests and nuns have worn their "habits" of black and white for years. Are such uniforms excessive or moderate in style? To a non-Catholic, a priest or nun stands out from the crowd like a sore thumb. What about the dress of Mennonites, Amish and other such groups? Aren't they an oddity with their fashion? Wouldn't this be the very thing that Paul was discussing with Timothy? What about Pentecostal women who refuse to wear makeup and put their hair up in the way they do? Doesn't that draw more attention to their physical appearance than a woman who used moderate makeup and had her hair groomed? Does the average Pentecostal woman, Mennonite, Amish, priest, or nun, with their style of dress, draw attention to the spiritual or cause people to look at their style as excessive? Aren't they guilty of the very thing Paul, Peter, and the Spirit condemned?

What About Skimpy Clothing?

Although Paul did not discuss skimpy clothing, if a one could be excessive in overdressing, could not one be excessive in underdressing? Since a man is to hold up "holy hands," and a woman is to dress "decently and with propriety . . . with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God" how should that be done? Would revealing or enticing clothing fit the Spirit's description? Have we lost our sense of godliness in exchange for fashion, comfort or entertainment? Think about it.

Lessons From Acts 10

Continued From Page 2

less (Psalm 68:5). The Jews were told to enter not into the fields of the fatherless (Proverbs 23:10), and to do no violence to the stranger and fatherless (Jeremiah 22:3). Such a man was Cornelius who helped them rather than trying to take that which they had. One can be ever so benevolent and still not be saved, because one must do more than fear God and help the needy. He must work righteousness to be saved (Acts 10:34, 35). To work righteousness means to obey the commands of Christ (Romans 10:16, 17).

4. He was a PRAYING man. Notice that Cornelius prayed and his prayers were heard yet he was unsaved. The reason this is so is because prayer is not God's plan of salvation. Man can call on the Lord in prayer, yet refuse to do what God commands, and God will not recognize him as acceptable (Matthew 7:21-23). The only thing the prayers of Cornelius did for him was that God gave him the opportunity of hearing the gospel, then it was up to him to act upon the gospel in order to be saved.

5. He was a PROMPT man. As soon as the angel departed from him, he sent two household servants and a devout soldier to Joppa for Peter. When he

determined what time Peter would arrive, he had the crowd ready. We need to be prompt in what we do. Much valuable time that could be used for the Lord is wasted because of hesitation to begin.

6. This man PLANNED FOR A GOSPEL MEETING. He called together his kinsmen and near friends, and had them all ready when Peter arrived. He knew that if an angel sent him after a preacher that an important message would be presented. He wanted all his friends and family to hear that message. Are we as anxious that our friends hear the gospel?

7. They were PRESENT to hear all things that the Lord commanded (Acts 10:33). They had not gathered to hear what the Lord commanded. Oh, that they had gathered to hear what the Lord commanded. Oh, that people of our day would only gather to hear what the Lord commanded! What a blessing it would be to their souls!

8. The result of this meeting was that God's PLAN was obeyed. They believed (verse 43), repented (Acts 11:18), and were baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ (verses 47, 48).

--Route 3, Box 62, Brewton, AL 36426.

Although Paul did not discuss skimpy clothing, if a one could be excessive in overdressing, could not one be excessive in underdressing?

Conclusion

When a person submits to the gospel, he gives himself to Jesus as his Lord, King and husband. Jesus wants a bride without "spot" (Ephesians 5:27). The way we dress reflects who we love -- Jesus or the world. Is it really the greatest thing in the world to be a Christian? If so, we will not go to excesses in dress so that we draw attention to the flesh rather than to the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-21).

--Via Campbell Street, Bulletin, Jackson, TN 38305.

Why Did You Do It?



Edsel Bureson

Motivation is an oft-discussed subject. To "motivate" is to "stimulate to action." We frequently hear "I know what I need to do, I just can't seem to get with it." Too often we rely on "gimmicks" or some artificial stimuli to prompt action. Jesus warned, "take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew

6:1).

David C. Carter, in "Action Techniques for the Take-Charge Sales Manager" tells how the late Gil Hodges, baseball great and manager of the New York Mets, used to convince every one of his batters that they could hit against major league pitching successfully.

As one player said, "He'd start right in during spring training and wouldn't let up until the ninth inning of the last game of the season!"

As a result the Amazin' Mets captured the World Championship in 1969 despite preseason odds of 100 to 1 against them!

One may get excited and active about something with which he is completely deceived. Paul said, "I verily thought within myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9).

"Specialty Salesman" magazine once told about an optimistic watch salesman. He examined the sample watch furnished him, noting attributes inscribed rather illegibly on its back: "Shockproof, anti-magnetic, waterproof, and bustproof."

The last adjective inspired him. He began demonstrating the watches with almost vicious enthusiasm. He tossed them off walls, against buildings, onto cement sidewalks. His confidence in himself, in

He "Strengthened His Hand In God"!



Joe E. Galloway

Jonathan and David were the closest of friends (I Samuel 18:1), a friendship which continued even though Jonathan's father, King Saul, was attempting to assassinate David. For self-protection David was living in the woods, in the wilderness of Ziph. At this time I Samuel 23:16 tells us, "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and

went to David into the wood, and **strengthened his hand in God.**"

Would to God all of our relationships with each other as Christians could be summed up with these same words! They should be. God expects us to "care one for another" (I Corinthians 12:25). We are to always do that which will edify (strengthen) one another (Romans 14:19). We are to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

There are so many ways we can "strengthen" each other "in God." We can express our appreciation for good that we see others doing. We can encourage by word and action when we see others discouraged. We can "prod" those who are slack in doing God's will to exert more effort to serve the Lord. This means of strengthening each other is described in these words in Hebrews 10:24, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. . ." One example of this is encouraging those who are newer or weaker to attend services more regularly. This is the matter at hand in the above text, for the next verse continues the thought, ". . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Sometimes strengthening others may require correcting them in the right spirit, or even restoring them to the Lord (see Galatians 6:1). Even the extreme act of withdraw-

ing fellowship is properly done for the purpose of strengthening the body of Christ, and with the hope of regaining the erring one (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15). One important way of strengthening others in God is to live an exemplary life before them.

To be effective in strengthening others in God we must get to know them well. This will involve some time and effort, for it will mean inviting others into our home and also going into their homes. Each Christian should try to become better

acquainted with every member of the congregation. As soon as new members are added, whether by conversion or by moving in and placing membership, we should make an extra effort to become acquainted with them. Members who visit each other become close to each other. And, only those who are close to others are in position to strengthen their hand in God. Let's all make an effort to do this!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

Why Did You Do It?

Continued From Page 3

the company and their watches, plus his vigorous demonstrations, paid off. He won a sales contest prize: \$100 and one of the watches.

It was when he examined his own prize watch that the startling truth was revealed. For on the back, more clearly inscribed this time, were the words: "Shockproof, antimagnetic, waterproof and dustproof."

The motive behind an act often determines the acceptability or unacceptability of the act. This is seen in the betrayal kiss which Judas gave to Jesus on the night of his arrest. Ordinarily, one thinks of a kiss as being an evidence of tender affection and love. Yet in the garden of Gethsemane, when Judas came with a mob and placed the betrayal kiss, it was a kiss from a traitor's heart. The motive changed it from something that might have been beautiful into something terrible and despicable.

Several years ago the Healdton, Oklahoma, Bulletin contained these excellent suggestions entitled "What I Could Do If I Wanted To."

1. If I wanted to, I could help make this church the most wide-awake and working church in all the world.
2. If I wanted to, I could visit members who are sick and possibly find other ways of helping them.
3. If I wanted to, I could attend Bible classes regularly, and encourage others to attend.
4. If I wanted to, I could show more devotion in worship services, and receive much more good from them myself.
5. If I wanted to, I could profit more from the sermon by not resenting the truth when it reveals my weaknesses.
6. If I wanted to, I could tell others about Christ and His church and lead them to salvation -- at least my actions could always speak for Him!
7. If I wanted to, I could use my efforts to help promote the greatest possible harmony in the church.
8. If I wanted to, I could give back to the Lord each Lord's day as I have been prospered; thereby helping to spread the gospel of Christ into all the world.
9. Of course, this all depends on what I want to do about it. I have the ability to be an honored servant of the greatest of all Kings, but the question is, "What Do I Really Want To Do?"

Our motives must be the same as the Master's motives -- the same love for man "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8); and to please our Heavenly Father, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). True, the Lord is interested in what we do, but He is also interested in why we do what we do!

--Via West End News, 420 Seventh Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

True, the Lord is interested in what we do, but He is also interested in why we do what we do!

Nobody's Friend

My name is Gossip. I have no respect for justice.

I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives.

I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.

The more I am quoted the more I am believed.

My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and face.

To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become.

I am nobody's friend.

Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same.

I topple governments and wreck marriages.

I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartaches and indigestion. I make innocent people cry in their pillows.

Even my name hisses. I am called gossip.

I make headlines and headaches. Before you repeat a story, ask yourself. Is it true? Is it fair?

Is it necessary? If not, don't repeat it.

*When I have lost my temper,
I have lost my reason too.
I'm never proud of anything,
Which angrily I do.
When I have talked in anger
And my cheeks are flaming red,
I have always uttered something
Which I wish I had not said.
In anger I have never
Done a kindly deed or wise,
But many things for which I felt
I should apologize.
In looking back across my life,
At all I asked or made,
I can't recall a single time
When fury ever paid.
So I struggle to be patient,
For I've reached a wiser age;
I do not want to do a thing
Or speak a word in rage.
I have learned by sad experience
That when my temper flies,
I never do a worthy deed,
A decent deed or wise.*

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Words Of Truth

"I am
Words"

forth the
Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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Working Out Salvation



Jerri Manasco

message of grace and be persuaded by it to turn to Jesus and the salvation that is in him (Mark 16:15, 16; Romans 10:13-17; I Corinthians 1:17-21). God sent confirming gifts of the Spirit to the apostles so that they might firmly establish the gospel among us (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3, 4). First century preachers gave their lives in order to give us the message of the way of life (Acts 7:59, 60; 12:1, 2; cf., II Timothy 4:6-8; etc.). All of this and more stands in the glorious shadow of the great salvation. Surely one can see from these things how important this salvation is! It is therefore no great thing for God to impress on us through his word the importance of our **securing and insuring** this great salvation for ourselves!

At the dawn of the Christian age Peter pleaded with those to whom he spoke on Pentecost to "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). How urgent this plea was and still is! This "untoward generation" is a lost generation! God in his mercy has extended his arms of salvation to all who will reach for them. Paul, in one of the most remarkable passages from his pen, emphasized the urgency of the preparation for this great salvation. He wrote, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do

of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13). In view of what God has done, then it is certainly befitting that we assume the obligation that he places on us relative to this matter! The "human side" of the plan of salvation is of such little weight in the light of the incomparable grace of God that I am amazed that there are so many people who object to having men "do something" to be saved! In light of the self imposed "poverty" (II Corinthians 8:9) of Christ and the self surrender of Christ at the cross (John 3:16; 10:17, 18; Galatians 2:20), why should anyone think it strange that God would predicate salvation on man's obedience? Does the fact that we must "do" something frighten the faithless? Does it seem distasteful to the Calvinist? Clearly Paul indicates in Philippians 2 that we do indeed have a responsibility in our own salvation, otherwise words have no meaning at all.

Does the fact that we must "do" something frighten the faithless? Does it seem distasteful to the Calvinist? Clearly Paul indicates in Philippians 2 that we do indeed have a responsibility in our own salvation, otherwise words have no meaning at all.

Personal and careful attention must be given to the matter of salvation. There is not a scripture anywhere nor even a **hint of a scripture** anywhere in the word of God that even remotely frees man of any duty regarding his salvation. The very act of preaching itself implies human response is necessary. In Mark 16:15, 16 salvation is built upon (1) The preaching of the gospel and (2) the individual reception (or rejection) of it! Why did Paul reason of "righteousness and temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts 24:25) when talking to Felix? Why did Paul say that "we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11) if God is going to do all the

work and man is not responsible for being lost and has nothing to do with being saved? Why did Paul issue the warnings in I Corinthians 10:1-11 if one need not pay much attention to the business of "working out" his salvation? Why did Peter write the instructions in II Peter 1:5-11 regarding Christian growth if this has no bearing on salvation? Indeed all the Bible both generically and specifically agrees totally with Paul's comment concerning working out our salvation. If "I" have nothing to do with my own salvation, then why did Paul say that I do?

Personal responsiveness is expected and necessary. We do not work out our salvation by simply hoping for it! We do not work it out by waiting for God to do something! God has sent Christ, the apostles, the gospel, etc. on our behalf. It is for us now to lay hold on this hope. It is not a matter of feeling inside but of conscious activity applied toward our salvation. Every example of conversion in Acts points to this truth. Every statement in the New Testament relating to salvation on the human side points to this fact. Certainly we cannot save ourselves without the cross and we cannot be saved without grace; but the cross and the grace of God and his love has opened the way for us to enter in. Remember that Jesus teaches that we must strive to enter (Luke 13:24) and that we must build toward it (Matthew 7:24-27). When Peter said, "Save yourselves . . ." (Acts 2:40), he meant just that! When Paul said, "Working out your own salvation . . ." (Philippians 2:12) he meant just that!

When Paul instructs us to work out this salvation with fear and trembling, he means to tell us just that! It is difficult how one can claim to be a fearer and a trembler when he rejects the very teaching he claims to accept! Even in the Old Testament God promised to be with him who "trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). God accepts any who fears him and works righteousness (Acts 10:34, 35). It is simply not possible to get away from the doing of something! To work out salvation is urgent. They who fear God will do exactly as he says!

It is not God's pleasure that any be lost (II Peter

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25



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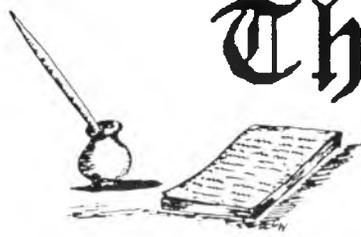
Working Out Salvation

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3:9; I Timothy 2:4; Ezekiel 33:11). However, it is not God's will that any be saved who don't want to be saved. "Whosoever will . . ." (Revelation 22:17) is the divine order. The positive exhortation in Philippians 2:12 should be persuasive enough to cause one to want to be saved! If I want to be saved, then why should I seek to excuse myself from those obligations divinely imposed! Some make Philippians 2:13 seem to say that God does the work while we just enjoy the results. Surely one can see that God's good pleasure is for us to obey him. He has worked into us the beauties of his saving grace and the grandness of his eternal purpose through his word. As we grow in knowledge and maturity then we are able to work toward that great purpose of God in ourselves.

As one works out his salvation with fear and trembling, he will ever be striving to attain that to which God has called him (Philippians 3:12-15). While he will be concerned about others' salvation he will not be negligent toward himself. He will not be so occupied with YOUR faults that he forgets to work on his own. Paul stated the case well. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). Here is the apostle himself putting into practice his teaching! He was working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He was conscious of the need to save others, but he never lost sight of his own needs. While he admonished others to tend to their salvation, he was busy striving faithfully for the crown that awaited him (II Timothy 4:7, 8; James 1:12). He knew that a lifetime of preparation preceded the eternal salvation so desired by the saints. He knew also that a careless neglect would rob him of his goal. Note that Paul said to WORK out your salvation; he did not say PLAY it out. What a blessing awaits the diligent child of God!

--Rt. 7, Box 428, Boaz, AL 35957.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Food And Fellowship



David Wade

deliverances were celebrated in fellowship meals.

The feast days of the Old Testament were of this order. Ritually, the worshipper ate portions of some of the animals offered in sacrifice (Exodus 12:1-20). Participation in ritual meals was limited to true believers. It was the mark of acceptance of, and acceptance by, the true God of heaven. God said of the passover meal, "There shall no stranger eat thereof" (Exodus 12:43).

Later, David gave a commentary on the generation who rejected the Lord, "They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead. Thus, they provoked Him to anger with their deeds" (Psalm 106:28-29). To participate in a ritual meal was to yoke oneself either to idols or the true God; that is, to whomever the meal was dedicated (cf. I Corinthians 8:4-13; 10:18-33).

The positive spiritual benefits of communal meals are quite evident in the New Testament. The frequent meals shared by members of the church were indications of the deep fellowship that developed among the participants. They were also symbolic of their commitment to one another and to the Lord. "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common . . . So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:44, 46).

Likewise, the Lord's supper is a symbolic affirmation of our commitment to Jesus. It represents communion, that is fellowship or joint participation, with Jesus and with each other. Jesus said he would "drink it new" with us in the Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29). Paul states, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread" (I Corinthians

10:16-17).

While the New Testament extols the positive benefits of fellowship meals, it is just as quick to warn us of some negative detriments of fellowship meals.

The church at Corinth was not properly observing the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:17-34). That which was to bind them to each other and to the Lord was being used in such a way as to perpetuate class distinctions, and thus led to alienation. For that reason, Paul urged them to eat their meals at home and wait for each other to enter into the Lord's Supper (11:17-22, 33-34).

Please note, Paul was not condemning eating in the "church house." Church houses, as such were unknown to the early church. Most likely, they were assembled at a member's house. (cf. I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:5). Eating together was not the problem. The unholy way they conducted themselves was the problem.

Jude spoke of those who were "spots in your love feasts" (Jude 12). The context reveals that they were immoral and hated those in authority (vss. 8, 13, 16, 19). Paul warned that faithful Christians are to have no company with and not even to eat with wicked Christians (I Corinthians 5:9-13). John sounded similar warnings (II John 9-11).

Eating food meets basic needs of all living creatures. But eating food also meets other needs. In the Christian community eating is also an occasion for friendship and fellowship with the Lord and one another. There are positive benefits to be derived and there are negative detriments to be avoided.

Visiting Pays

The Los Angeles Executive Club Published some extremely interesting facts about salesmen's calls:

1. Eighty percent of all sales are made after the fifth call back.
2. Forty-eight percent of all salesmen make one call and quit.
3. Twenty-five percent make two calls and quit.
4. Twelve percent make three calls and quit.

In other words the difference between selling and failing to sell lies in the number of calls.

It is sometimes hard to get Christians to visit. It is even harder to get them to re-visit!

Salesmen and Christians must be persistent. The answer is to visit, visit and then VISIT again!! AND, if you are interested in saving souls, VISIT AGAIN!!!

The Sin Of Doing Nothing



W. A. Holley

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

You may not have committed the sin of murder or theft or adultery, but if you have not been "born again . . . born of water and of the Spirit," you are a sinner nevertheless (Romans 3:23; 6:23). To be "born again . . . born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3,5), is to believe that Jesus is the Christ, repent of all sin, confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of Christ for remission of sin (John 3:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-5). When one is "born again . . . born of water and of the Spirit," one is saved: but to be saved one must "believe and be baptized," taught Jesus (Mark 16:16). The conclusion which we have reached is correct because "things that are equal to the same thing, are equal to each other." Hence, whatever one must do to be saved is, precisely, what one must do to be "born again . . . born of water and of the Spirit."

Whether one wishes to admit it or not, there are some "thou shalt" and some "thou shalt not." (cf. Exodus 20:3-17; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 22:34-40). No person can be saved merely on the basis of things not done. One who lives a good moral life is admirable, but one cannot be saved purely on morality alone. If such could have been the case, then the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cruel cross would not have been necessary (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22-28). There are sins of omission and sins of commission. To God Almighty, sin is sin, of whatever class.

During Jesus' personal ministry, he denounced those sinners who did nothing. Consider these examples: the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side (Luke 10:25-37); the rich man who allowed the beggar to lie unaided at his gate (Luke 16:19-31); the servant who hid his master's pound in a napkin, thus refused to use his opportunity (Luke 19:11-27); the unprofitable servant who buried his talent (Matthew 25:14-30). These (and many others could be mentioned) were not scum or refuse of society . . . rather, they were people who chose to do nothing.

Listen to Jesus, your Saviour and mine: "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matthew 25:41-43).

What about you? Are you committing the sin of negligence? (Hebrews 2:1-4). Are you refusing to exercise the care demanded of a prudent person? Do you know to do better than you are doing? Many are fully aware of their negligence. When approached regarding their failure to respond to God's demands, some say, "Yes, I know my duty. I intend to begin doing the right thing one of these days. I am not ready as of yet. Just give me a little

more time to make up my mind. I'll do the right thing before it is too late . . . you'll see." Here is stated the sad story of King Agrippa, who heard the great apostle Paul preach the glorious gospel of Christ, but wavered, as far as we know, to his own destruction (Acts 26:24-29).

The sin of neglect is extremely difficult to combat, for very few ever come to their senses and take up the axe of accountability and begin chopping away at the mountain of duty.

Do you know that you must obey the gospel Christ? (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-10). If so, why do you yet delay? Life's slender thread might be severed at any moment; then why do you still postpone your obedience to Jesus the Christ?? When it is too late, it is too late!!

Most members of the Lord's church know they should assemble with the saints and worship God in His own appointed way (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2), but thousands neglect to do their duty. Why? Failing to do one's duty leads to everlasting destruction (Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). Yea, idleness, procrastination, and neglect are the enemies of the soul!

Verily, thousands know they could contribute of their means that the gospel may be preached to the lost and that the poor may be supplied their needs, but inaction and indolence never gets the job done.

Where does the church obtain its money? From its members! (Acts 11:29; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-7). The sin of doing nothing hinders the growth of the Lord's church.

You know, according to God's word, to pray and study God's word, and to sing His praises, but the question is, are you doing what you know should be done??

It is high time for us to examine ourselves to see if we are guilty of the sin of doing nothing!! Let us stop sitting on the stool of do-nothing and whittling on the stick of do-less. Let us arise and be about our Father's business. Let us put on the whole armor of God, let us unsheath our sword and get on with our battle against Satan and sin. The sin of negligence is extremely dangerous and the wages of sin, whether omission or commission, is death (Romans 6:23).

Let us stop sitting on the stool of do-nothing and whittling on the stick of do-less. Let us arise and be about our Father's business.

Am I My Brother's Keeper?



Dalton Key

It all depends upon your definition of the word "keeper."

We are called to love all men - our neighbor (Matthew 22:39), our enemy (Matthew 5:44), and of course our brother (Romans 12:10). Love, if it is to be genuine, must be active, working for the good of the one loved. Thus, we are admonished to "do good unto all men, especially unto them

who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Brotherly love insists that we submit to the needs of our brother (Ephesians 5:21), as we strive, "every one of us," to "please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Romans 15:2). We should pray for our brother (I Thessalonians 5:21), teach and admonish our brother (Colossians 3:16), exhort our brother (Hebrews 3:13; 10:25), and show hospitality toward our brother (I Peter 4:9). When our brother is overtaken in a fault, we should, in the spirit of meekness, seek to restore him (Galatians 6:1). Our brother's burdens, be they emotional, social, financial, or spiritual, should be shared by fellow-heirs of the kingdom who love him (Galatians 6:2). In short, we should treat our brother as we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12). If this is what is meant by the

word "keeper," then we are indeed our brother's keeper.

But we are not, in the final sense, responsible for our brother's eternal destiny. We are not responsible for policing his every thought, word, and act. There are some burdens which our brother must bear alone (Galatians 6:5). Each of us has a responsibility and an accountability for himself before God, and no man can be expected to answer for another at the Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12). We are responsible for the teaching we give our brother, for the encouragement we lend him; but his life, his direction, and his destiny are not ours to "keep."

--P.O. Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.

Unexpected Reward

I recall that when I was a small boy, my mother gave me a bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley and directed me to take them down the street to a neighbor who was ill. When I returned she said, "Smell your hands." I sniffed, and to my childish delight, I found that my hands still bore the delicate odor of the flowers. Then my mother said something I shall never forget.

"Flowers always leave some of their fragrance on the hands of the giver." Life itself is like that. Every good deed or action towards someone else is bound to leave us a sweeter person.

--Author Unknown

"Grace Greater Than Our Sins"

Raymond Elliott

Recently, I sang this beautiful hymn along with approximately 1200 other persons during a Sunday afternoon assembly. The singing was beautiful! The lyrics of this particular song overwhelmed my soul. To think that my Gracious Heavenly Father loves me enough to cover my sins with his unmerited favor fills my heart with deep emotion. I am filled with joy, gladness and thanksgiving when I contemplate what God has done for me. It was by the grace of God that Jesus died on Calvary for my sins (Hebrews 2:9). The great theme of God's grace needs to be emphasized in our pulpits and in our Bible classes. The disciples of Christ need to hear of this blessed assurance. While there is much rejoicing over this great truth that Christians are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5), there are individuals who do not appreciate nor enjoy the grace of God.

First of all, there is the calloused sinner who does not feel nor realize that he is lost. To truly appreciate the grace of God a person must understand that he is lost and without God in this world, to realize his plight in life (Ephesians 2:12), and turn from his evil ways to God for mercy.

Also, there is the individual who feels that he must work enough to be worthy of eternal life. However, salvation cannot be earned, it is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). It is understood that grace does not nullify obedience; but if a person believes that he must be good enough on his own merits to enter heaven, he will be miserable in this life.

Then, there is the person who believes he is good enough as is to deserve salvation because he is a good husband, a charitable person, and an upright citizen. He feels no need of humbling himself before the Almighty God and being in submission

to the Lordship of Christ. The secular humanist feels no need of God's redeeming grace because there is no awareness of sin in his life.

It is wonderful to know, as a vile sinner, lost and undone, that God's grace is greater than all my sins. The proper understanding of God's Amazing Grace motivates a person to give his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be grateful that by the grace of the Heavenly Father we have been redeemed from our sins and possess the hope of eternal life. "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright, shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun."

--104 Rosewood Drive, Prattville, Alabama 36067.

Alabama Christian School Of Religion Is Now Accredited

Of great interest to preachers, elders, teachers, and others who desire to continue their Christian education is the announcement that Alabama Christian School of Religion has received accreditation for its three-year graduate program by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on June 23, 1989, according to Dr. Rex A. Turner, Jr., President. Graduate degrees offered at ACSR are

the Master of Arts and a three-year program leading to the Master of Divinity. Also, the third and fourth years of undergraduate studies are offered. For additional information, call 1-800-351-4040 or out-of-state: 1-800-351-3939.

Raymond Elliott, Vice-Chairman, ACSR Board of Regents

Liars And Lies

The people of the Bible were not plaster saints. They were real people who stood in need of God's mercies. They were not above telling lies. Can you identify the characters whose lie appears below?

1. She denied, saying, "I did not laugh."
2. He said, "You will not die."
3. They said (about a robe), "This we have found."
4. He said to Samuel, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord."
5. He said, "I do not know the man."
6. "I do not know," he said, "Am I my brother's keeper?"
7. She said to Saul, "He [David] is sick."
8. He said to Ahimelech, "The king has charged me with a matter."
9. He lied to Peter about the sale of his property.
10. He said, "I am Esau your first-born."

Something To Think About

The recent issue of *Christian Woman* magazine reported a study of 2,400 teens revealed that early dating leads to early sex. Of the girls who started dating at age 12, 91% had sex before graduating from high school, compared to 20% who started dating at age 16.

Are we giving our young people the proper biblical teaching on this topic? Are we putting them in difficult situations too soon? Are we exposing

them to too much promiscuity in the movies and television programs they are allowed to watch?

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God" (I Thessalonians 4:3-5).

The Right Side

Every Sunday morning, an old man walked several blocks to church. He was deaf, so he couldn't hear the sermon or the singing. "Why do you spend your Sundays in that church when you can't hear a word?" a neighbor asked. "I want

people around here to know which side I'm on," he replied.

How about you? Do your neighbors know which side you're on, on Sunday morning?

Taking Life Seriously

To realize how short life really is, think of a life span of seventy years as a single day -- from 7:00 in the morning until 11:00 at night. If your age is:

- 15, the time is 10:25 a.m.
- 20, the time is 11:34 a.m.
- 25, the time is 12:42 p.m.
- 30, the time is 1:51 p.m.
- 35, the time is 3:00 p.m.
- 40, the time is 4:08 p.m.
- 45, the time is 5:16 p.m.
- 50, the time is 6:25 p.m.
- 55, the time is 7:34 p.m.
- 60, the time is 8:42 p.m.
- 65, the time is 9:51 p.m.
- 70, the time is 11:00 p.m.

This exercise reminds us that we don't have a lot of time to serve God. Let's get busy and make every day count for him.

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad. most of the time."
Words of

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26:25

VOLUME 25

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NUMBER 35

Can We Serve God Just As Well Outside The Assembly??



Joe E. Galloway

Recently we came across some results of a survey published in February of 1989. This survey suggested that 72% of Protestants, 83% of Roman Catholics, and 81% of those of other religious persuasions [possibly Jewish and/or some others, J.E.G.] believe a person can "meet" or worship God just as well on a fishing trip as in a church service. Two thirds of all "church members" said they believed one could be just as acceptable to God if they did not attend their church or synagogue.

While this is not too shocking regarding attitudes toward worship from religions which neither teach nor practice pure New Testament Christianity, we suspect that many among "us" would respond the same way if surveyed. At least we have many who do not consistently assemble at all services. And, some of these will be absent from services because of a fishing or camping trip, because of attending a sporting event, or because of some similar recreational activity. Occasionally, we even hear some member say something like this: "I feel just as close to God, or perhaps closer, when I'm sitting out by the lake than when I'm sitting in church services.

What about such an attitude? Consider these observations:

First, it is true we can know that God exists by the things he has made (read Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20). One should be reminded of the

power, design, and wisdom of God when he views God's beautiful creation. Yet, we can know of God's will and our obligations to him only by God's revealed word, the Bible!

Second, it is not enough to simply "feel close to God," one must also do his will (Matthew 7:21). Part of God's revealed will to us today involves both the requirement that we assemble with his people (Hebrews 10:25) and the instructions of what we must do in worship to be acceptable to him. To be accepted of God we must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24).

Although "in spirit" suggests we must worship sincerely from our hearts, "in truth" shows that such heart-felt worship must be according to God's word (cf. John 17:17). One cannot worship God acceptably, in God's appointed manner, when he forsakes the assembly of God's people for worship and substitutes this with a nature-appreciation jaunt!

Third, we have some Bible examples of what results when men seek God their own way, but not the way God instructs:

1. Cain's sacrifice to God in Genesis 2 was rejected because he did not offer by faith -- he did not offer what God had commanded. He did it his way!

2. Leviticus 10:1-2 tells of Nadab and Abihu being burned to death by the Lord when they were offering sacrifice to him. Why? Because they "offered stranged fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not." You see, they did what they thought best!

3. In II Chronicles 13 David gave orders to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. They transported it on a new ox-cart. When the oxen stumbled, the driver (Uzza) put his hand on the ark to steady it. Verse

10 says, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God." Two chapters later, we are told the reason for this severe act of God: "the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order" (15:13). God's word had required that his ark be carried by properly sanctified Levites. They had done it their own way, so disaster resulted!

Regardless of how good it makes us feel, or how much we believe we can draw near to God our way (out by the lake, or up in the mountains, or over by the seashore), we had better do things God's way! God requires his people to assemble together to worship him on the Lord's Day!

--218 Pincrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

Regardless of how good it makes us feel, or how much we believe we can draw near to God our way (out by the lake, or up in the mountains, or over by the seashore), we had better do things God's way!

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

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Serving Or Using People

Charles Hodge

Our biggest mistake? Trying to be a "Success Church" rather than a "Servant Church." Jesus left the church one legacy -- a towel. You do not wash feet with a towel -- you dry! Finish the job of serving, yet so non-intentionally, we use people. This is tough yet true. We judge folks -- assets or liabilities. We judge by what they can do for us. Yet Moses died. Paul died. Great members die/move. We are devastated. Even Paul admitted he remained alive for us (Philippians 1).

Our biggest mistake? Trying to be a "Success Church" rather than a "Servant Church."

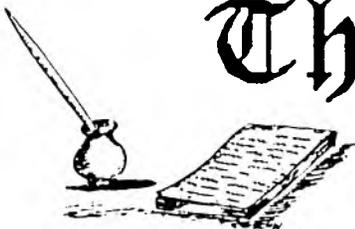
A talented rich family moves in. All local churches vie to gain their membership. Congregation "wins." A poor widow with ten kids moves in. She is not "courted." A great member is transferred. We are devastated. We think in terms of "us." Our "biggest giver" is to move. Our faith wavers! Tragically, most church growth is determined by areas of "movers in" and "movers out." One church grows at the expense of another. We give preferential treatment to some rich members who never give -- thinking they will. They won't! James talked about this.

Brethren use elders. They turn the eldership into a "Complaint Department." They grab an elder to gain an ear and get their way. Being available to sheep and being used by billy goats are two different things. Elders are servants. They must not use members; they must not be used by members. The greatest sin down at church is using others!!!

Brethren use preachers. Preachers are servants. Yet they resent being used. Some are bribed, flattered -- and used. Most find members wishing to

Continued On Page 3

The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Dress Codes



David Wade

they have no sense of modesty or decency. On the other hand, if he sweeps the issue under the rug, his conscience smites him (and it ought to!) because he is afraid to declare the whole counsel of God to a disobedient membership.

Take courage, dear friend! There are those outside the churches of Christ who, unlike many "faithful" members, still believe in modesty and decency. For instance, we have two new school principals in Jasper who plan to enforce the following:

Jasper City Schools

Dress Code 1989-90

Middle And High School

School is a place of business and students should dress accordingly. Students are expected to maintain the highest possible standard of personal hygiene. This includes personal cleanliness (for example, daily bath and oral hygiene), as well as wearing neatly pressed, clean clothes. Students are also expected to choose their clothes in good taste, wearing those clothes which are appropriate for an educational environment.

1. All students are expected to maintain the highest possible standard of personal hygiene. This includes personal cleanliness, as well as wearing neatly pressed, clean clothes.

2. Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip flops are not allowed.

3. No students may wear dark glasses while inside the school building.

4. No students may wear hats, headbands, sweatbands, bandanas, or head covering of any kind while inside the building.

5. No students will be allowed to wear clothing or jewelry which displays suggestive slang or advertising (alcohol, drugs); or inappropriate language.

6. No students will be allowed to wear shorts in school.

7. Torn clothes will not be allowed - High School.

8. Dresses and skirts should be of modest length,

as determined by school officials. Split skirts that cannot be distinguished from skirts are allowed. Properly fitted sweat suits are allowed.

9. Sundresses must be worn with jackets.

10. No students will be allowed to wear tank tops, halter tops, tube tops, or midriffs. Students may not wear transparent tops without adequate undergarments. No tops cut low in the front, back or side will be allowed. There should be no skin showing between the bottom of the blouse and top of the pants or skirt.

11. Boys may not wear earrings.

12. Hair should be clean and out of the students eyes. Boys hair should not touch the T-shirt collar. Facial hair is allowed if it is well trimmed and groomed.

13. No boys will be allowed to wear sleeveless shirts.

14. Gloves will not be worn in the school building.

15. Proper undergarments must be worn with all clothing with no substitutes or exceptions.

16. Students will not be permitted to attend classes while wearing any article of clothing which may disturb a proper learning environment.

17. The school administration will judge the appropriateness of any "fad" or questionable article of apparel.

Amazing! Astounding! How refreshing to find some "out there" in the secular realm who have principles and have the grit and grind to stand up for them! Meanwhile, some of my brethren would argue for the proverbial string, strap, or leaf as modest apparel.

Students who break the dress code will be sent home. If it is challenged in court, the principals stand a chance to win. Similar dress codes have been upheld in court.

Some parents will complain. Other parents, including myself, will back the principals and school board to the hilt.

If you are needing change in your area, why not share the above with your school officials.

There is a great lesson for the church in this matter. As Jesus said, ". . . the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8).

Move away from temptation and leave no forwarding address.

Grace All Sufficient



R. W. Gray

The deluge of materials flooding the brotherhood on the subject of grace frequently contain some reference to a lack of teaching on the subject in times past. It is unfair to the good men who have gone before to allow this false charge to go unchallenged. For so long as this writer can recall my brethren have talked of the sufficiency of God's grace

in saving men from their sins. This grace, provided in love, is not of man but of God. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Salvation, it has been urged, does not depend upon works of merit which we may perform. It is not dispensed on the basis of our national origin, our parents, our race, or our religious background. The obedience grace requires does not place God in man's debt. It is the word of his grace to which we have yielded our lives (Acts 20:32; Titus 2:11, 12).

Obedience to the gospel on man's part does not set up some kind of reciprocal action between God and man. God provided ALL the grace. Man's receiving that gift from heaven is not suggesting that God gave a little and we give a little in return.

The charge that grace has been ignored, then, is a false charge. Brethren have not failed to teach on this vital Bible theme. The difficulty, it seems, stems from the lack of appreciation for what was said on the subject, rather than the fact that the subject was not treated at all. Oft the critics quote men of the past on the subject, taking direct issue with their views of the matter.

Illustrations given by men of the past went something like this: "At the bar of judgment the Christian pleads his case, naming one by one the acts of obedience performed. 'That's fine,' was the response, 'but all your acts of love combined total no more than ten points, and you must score one hundred to enter.' At this point the Christian responds, 'I've nothing more to offer, I must throw myself upon the mercy of God!' 'This amounts to ninety points,' was the gate keepers reply, 'you may now enter.'" While we offer no serious objection to such imaginary illustrations, the fact remains that one must be faithful in Christ in order to be saved at last. The Lord even requires that we give our lives, if need be, before denying his grace. (Revelation 2:10)

Men of the past were correct in affirming that salvation depends upon a number of things. We are saved by blood, by Christ, by the gospel, by grace, by faith, and by obedience. It is serious error to affirm, as some now are doing, that we are saved 100% by grace. Such an idea smacks at rank Calvinism. We must be reminded of the seriousness of perverting the gospel of Christ. (Galatians 1:6-9) We may read our Bibles until our head is white with the snow of many winters, but we will never read the passage that suggests we are saved by grace alone. If so, then as the universalist affirmed, all will be saved. And it is certain that "once saved, always saved," is a true doctrine. That which demands a false conclusion is itself a false position. (Hebrews 2:9; Titus 2:11-12)

While God's unmerited favor toward dying men is a very limited definition of grace as used in the Bible, it does encompass this thought. The favor God bestows is certainly not merited by man's thoughts or actions. The favor provided by love is then an unmerited one.

Anticipating our feeble efforts in defining his grace God provided us with inspired illustrations. Jericho was a "gift" from God. This grace (gift) was received by obedient faith. (Joshua 6:1-2; Hebrews 11:30) Noah and his house were saved by grace through faith. But that grace was applied when faith obeyed. (Genesis 6:8; Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:22) The grace that saved the Ephesians was not without condition. They, like everyone else, were saved "in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3, 7) They gave up their sinful practices, turned to God, and were baptized. In order to continue in that grace they were required to live soberly and righteously so long as life should last (Acts 19:19; 19:5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:26, 27; Titus 2:11-12).

It is a matter of serious import to ignore or mini-

mize the love that drew salvation's plan, and to fail to praise the grace of him who brought it down to man. The wonderful grace of Jesus is greater than all my sin. How, then, shall my tongue describe it, or where shall it's praise begin? When finally we see him as he is and begin to serve him as we ought, we will not boast of our "obedience," but will sing the old refrain, "Saved by grace!"

--563 McGukin Road, Bremen, GA 30110.

It is a matter of serious import to ignore or minimize the love that drew salvation's plan, and to fail to praise the grace of him who brought it down to man.

Serving Or Using People

Continued From Page 2

control them. YOU be here! We pay you! You are our hiring! Members are profoundly suspicious of independent preachers. By carnal nature people want others "under their thumb." Preachers gladly serve; they deeply resent being used.

Even our evangelism says -- "Get him -- he could help us." SERVE - SERVE - SERVE. Servo the brethren, the community, the world. Quit using.

Get out your towel.
--Via "The Exhorter," Duncanville, TX.

Are You A Pew Prune?



Betty Burton Choate

We've been hearing lately about Couch Potatoes. No one had to explain the term, even to me. It's an apt name.

There is a striking parallel between our physical bodies and our spiritual bodies. The American population as a whole is just now waking up to the facts that all the junk food we eat is destroying our health, and that the ease and convenience of our way of life are not keeping our muscles exercised and toned as they should be. Many folks are getting on the bandwagon, forcing themselves to be more aware of a nutritious diet and of taking proper exercise. They are working at overcoming the laxness that made them Couch Potatoes.

Christians have been doing some things that were not good for their spiritual health, either. They've been consuming a lot of fluff that has slowed every area of spiritual functioning. And the lack of exercise has just about destroyed us. Over-indulgence, physically, adds to our size. Spiritually, it shrivels us up, making us wrinkled and dead inside. Too many sitting on our pews today are nothing but that -- Sitting Pew Prunes!

Eating proper physical food may seem distasteful at first, but it is necessary if we are to restore our

health. Proper exercise may wear us out and make our muscles sore -- but he won't regain physical strength and stamina without it.

The right kind of spiritual food may not taste very good to us -- but we must have what we NEED instead of what we have spoiled ourselves to want, if we are to restore our health before God. And getting up and going to work spiritually may seem exhausting and may make us hurt, but it must be done if we are to live.

The right kind of spiritual food may not taste very good to us - but we must have what we NEED instead of what we have spoiled ourselves to want, if we are to restore our health before God.

There is a fact, physically and spiritually: hunger pangs are **absolutely necessary**, soreness and tiredness **must be experienced**, if we are to reverse our wrongs and make them right. If we don't feel any of these things -- **hurting** -- we aren't doing enough.

Let's start a campaign to educate the Pew Prunes and remake them into _____. Well, you help me name the new breed!

--Route 2, Box 156 Winona, MS 38967.

"Be Thou Faithful"



Edsel Burleson

Several years ago, a cowboy who had recently become a Christian, gave this explanation of what it means to be faithful. "Lots of folks think that bein' faithful means shoutin' themselves hoarse praisin' the Lord. This is how I look at it. I'm workin' here for Mr. Jim. Now ifn' I sit

around the house talkin' about what a good man Mr. Jim is, and singin' songs to him, and gettin' up far into the night to serenade him, I'd be doing just what some church members do. But I wouldn't suit Mr. Jim. But when I buckle on my spurs and ride among the hills and see that Mr. Jim's herd is alright, and not sufferin' for water and feed, or bein' branded by cattle thieves, then I'm servin' him the way he expects me to. That's what I call bein' faithful.

Too many church members seem to think that there are essentially two things involved in being a Christian. Maxie Boren recently wrote: "What it amounts to is that brethren have formulated an equation in their own minds as to what constitutes being a Christian: It is A - attendance plus B - abstinence from the big 3 (getting drunk, doing drugs, and engaging in immoral conduct) equals being a Christian. This is a false equation.

"A more nearly correct equation would be something like this: A sense of deep need plus a humble spirit plus implicit faith and trust plus submissive obedience to the Lordship of Christ plus a keen awareness of the grace and mercy by which we're saved plus a diligent study of the Scriptures plus the desire to assemble and worship at every opportunity plus a right attitude in all things plus putting the kingdom of the Lord FIRST plus shunning what is wrong plus always trying to do what is right plus fidelity to truth plus unwavering faithfulness to the Savior equals being a Christian. And even then, thinking, "Though I really have tried, and continue to try to do all he would have me to do, at the very best I am an unprofitable servant." (See Luke 17:10).

What does "being faithful" mean to you? Is a car that starts once out of three times faithful? Is a paper boy who misses you with your paper every few evenings faithful? If you fail to go to work two or three times a week, would you be faithful? If your refrigerator quits for a day now and then, is it faithful? If your hot water heater greeted you with cold water one or two mornings a week, would it be faithful?

Patience Strong, in "Quiet Corner," wrote these lines entitled: Remember And Be Faithful.

Keep your love untarnished;
Be staunch and true.
Be loyal and betray not
The one who trusts in you.
No fleeting hour of pleasure
Is worth a life's regret.
Be strong, though great temptations
Around your path are set.
Happiness is precious
Too precious to destroy;

Folly leads to sorrow,
And virtue leads to joy.
Self respect is sweeter
Than any passing smile.
Remember and be faithful.
Remember all the while.

Jesus did not say, "Well done, good and successful servant," he said, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21, 23). Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). In Revelation 2:10, the church at Smyrna was admonished to

"...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

--Via West End News, 420 Seventh Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Jesus did not say, "Well done, good and successful servant," he said, "Well done, good and faithful servant"

Let's Trust Our Elders



Cecil May, Jr.

eldership of churches of Christ are qualified, conscientious leaders. They are not divinely inspired and they make mistakes. Other human beings, whoever would direct things if there were no elders, make mistakes also. Elders, by and large, make fewer than others would.

They are not divinely inspired and they make mistakes. Other human beings, whoever would direct things if there were no elders, make mistakes also. Elders, by and large, make fewer than others would.

On more than one occasion, someone has come to me with a scenario in which elders, if the situation were really as described, and made a decision that anyone with common sense could see was absolutely batty. Where it has been possible to check facts, however, additional factors not originally reported were involved. When all the facts were in, the elders' decision was reasonable. No one would say elders cannot be wrong. However, they rarely make absolutely batty decisions. If it appears they have, the situation is probably different than it has been described.

Elders frequently possess facts members do not know. Sometimes they have facts it is better for members not to know. For example, a popular preacher in a congregation was suddenly asked to resign by the eldership. There was an immediate hue and cry against the elders from some of the

congregation. Eventually, in order to salvage the unity of the church, the elders had to spell out what they knew that caused them to let the preacher go. Those who were closest to the preacher and had the strongest desire to protect his welfare were the saddest that they had forced the reason for the preacher's dismissal to become public.

It is easy for a young preacher, fresh out of school, to think of himself as having more a zeal and Bible knowledge than the elders under whom he works. Often, with age and experience, comes the realization that the elders' wisdom, or common sense, is an equally important quality. The preacher may also discover the elders have more Bible knowledge than he supposed. Bible knowledge is not solely measured by the number of scriptures that can be quoted, nor is formal classroom schooling the only means by which it can be attained.

The Bible says, "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17); "Know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

We would all be better off if we would heed these admonitions.

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

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"I am
Words of

Speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

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SEPTEMBER 8, 1989

NUMBER 36

"Are You Rich?"



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

area. They bring with them a solid record of faithful and dedicated service. We are pleased to have them as a part of the Sixth Avenue family.]

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Brother Joe Spivy joined the ministerial staff at Sixth Avenue Church of Christ August 1, 1989. He is working in radio evangelism, the Bible school program, youth work, personal evangelism, and assists in the pulpit duties. He and his wife, Eloise, are no strangers to the churches in this

rich as James 2:5 says we are "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." A person who belongs to God has all that belongs to God at his disposal and within his reach. Such riches as God bestows do not pass away with time but rather reach into eternity.

In Revelation 14:13 we read that "... their works do follow them" and if we well remember that Paul told Timothy to be "rich in good works" what can we expect to "follow us"? Isn't that being rich without money!

However, just as one can be rich without money, one can be poor with money. Sound strange? It isn't! The Laodiceans of Revelation 3 thought themselves to be rich, but were poor indeed. Are

you RICH or POOR? It's up to you.
--1400 6th Avenue Jasper, AL 35501.

Can one be rich without money? One person said, "Some day we're going to be rich." Their mate answered, "We are rich now, but someday we may have money." One was thinking in terms of material accumulation and the other of true riches.

The Ayatollah Is Dead . . . And He's Not Coming Back

Michael Gifford

Iran's radical and revolutionary religious leader is dead. The chaos that followed his passing was heart rending. His burial shroud was torn asunder. His corpse tumbled in the thronging masses. His tomb demanded a steel cover in order to keep his devotees from digging up his remains. And all through this turmoil people were shouting, "Father, come back. Please come back."

But Khomeini is not coming back. Just like all the religious leaders of the Moslem religion before him, he is dead, gone, forever separated from this earthly life. Likely, the coming years will find out less numbers of Moslems flocking to his grave to weep, to mourn and perhaps even to beg him to return. The hopelessness of the Moslem religions shall be vividly illustrated time and time again around the tomb of the one they called, "the imam man."

The recent events remind us of another death and burial, that of Jesus Christ. His demise was also attended by weeping, feelings of despair and

anguish on the part of those who followed Him. But there is one glaring difference between what ensued and what the Moslems will be experiencing in the years ahead. Today, one can visit what is the supposed site of Jesus' tomb. It is not the certain site, only a supposed one. But whether it is the actual site or not, there is something missing from the tomb of Jesus which is not missing from the grave of the Ayatollah; i.e., a body.

Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He came back to the land of the living (Mark 16:1ff). No one had to plead with Him to return. It was by His Father's will and power that He arose (Romans 6:4). Jesus burst the bonds of death. He arose to reign as Savior, as Lord as King.

The superiority of Christianity over world religions is seen over and over again but no more clearly than it is seen in our Leader, our Redeemer, our Lord. While the Moslems go to weep over an occupied grave, we who are Christians rejoice over

A story is told of two children collecting papers on a cold and damp night. They were greeted at a door by a lady who invited them to hot chocolate. As they drank, one of them asked, "Lady, are you rich?" In astonishment she answered, "Certainly not! Why do you ask?" "Your cups and saucers match" came the reply.

After they left, the lady thought, "Maybe they are right. My dishes do match. I have a warm house that keeps me dry. My husband has a good job and he provides for us, and he really loves me. Yes, maybe I am rich!"

Can one be rich without money? One person said, "Some day we're going to be rich." Their mate answered, "We are rich now, but someday we may have money." One was thinking in terms of material accumulation and the other of true riches.

Yes, one can be rich without money. Paul said that "We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God . . . as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:1, 3, 4, 10).

If we are God's children we are indeed heirs and

Continued On Page 2

Words Of Truth



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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
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Voyager 2

John Gipson

I stand amazed at what man can do. Twelve years ago a powerful Titan-Centaur rocket launched Voyager 2 from Cape Canaveral and headed it into the most complex journey in the history of the space age.

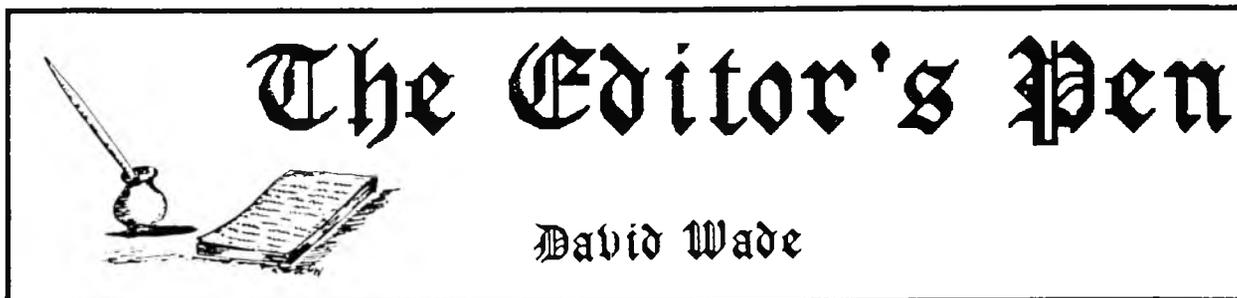
Voyager 2 is now taking pictures of Neptune with its rolling clouds above its surface and seeking out still more undiscovered moons. Its instruments are probing the planet's magnetic field, measuring infrared radiation from the frigid surface and analyzing the composition of the atmosphere. Its feeble radio - with less power than a refrigerator light bulb -- is transmitting steadily. Just think of it. This vessel has been speeding toward the blue-green cloud tops of the planet Neptune at a speed of more than 42,000 mph for twelve years! What a journey! The radio signals being sent back to Earth from Voyager 2 are traveling at 186,000 miles per second, yet they take over four hours to travel the nearly three billion miles back to Earth. Voyager 2 is the same one-ton automated craft which reached Jupiter in 1979 and photographed the Jovian storm clouds and the Great Red Spot. I find it hard to believe what man has been able to do.

But as amazed as I am by the ability of man, I stand in even more amazement at the wisdom and might of the God who created this universe. Distances beyond comprehension He has set before my eyes. Mathematical processes which baffle the minds of the wise are set in bold array. Unlimited power in creating and sustaining such a universe are at His disposal and clearly revealed.

My only response is awe and worship! How Great Thou Art!

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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David Wade

The Jim Bakker Debacle



David Wade

Now that Jim Bakker's trial is underway, we will probably see a steady stream of news concerning his sex scandal and the embezzlement charges against him. Back in March, 1987 when the story broke, a preacher friend asked me what my feelings were about the case. My reply was, "Let the truth hang out!" He readily agreed,

but added, "You know this will affect us all, indirectly." He has a point. However, it should not affect faithful Christians directly. New Testament Christians know that the PTL Ministry and all other religious groups not specifically revealed in the scriptures are plants which God has not planted. They are merely in competition with the church which Jesus built. All false ways will be rooted up (Matthew 15:13).

However, such scandals like Jim Bakker's and Jimmy Swaggart's will certainly make it more difficult for us to take the gospel to the unbelievers. People will be cynical of anything or anyone called "Christian." While reflecting on the bad reputation of the Jews, Paul charged, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (Romans 2:24). Paul spoke of the depressing environment in which the apostles worked. It was an uphill battle all the way.

"Even to the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now" (I Corinthians 4:11-13).

Yes, we will feel some "fallout" because of the sins of others. But let's make sure that it is because of the sins of others and not our own way of life. The hurt and harm is much worse when it involves those of the Lord's church.

Paul's admonitions in the Ephesian letter are very timely, "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but

now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:3-14).

The Ayatollah Is Dead . . . And He's Not Coming Back

Continued From Page 1

an empty one. While adherents to foreign religions plead with their leaders to "Come back. Please come back," we Christians thank God that our Lord did come back.

While the Moslems go to weep over an occupied grave, we who are Christians rejoice over an empty one. While adherents to foreign religions plead with their leaders to "Come back. Please come back," we Christians thank God that our Lord did come back.

There can be no hope at all found in a religion whose leaders are dead and buried. There can be no real joy in the hearts of those who must speak of their guides strictly in the past tense. But, oh, what hope, what wonderful joy there is in the hearts of Christians for we serve the One who, while on earth, called Himself the "I AM" (John 4:26; 8:58); not "I was," "I used to be," "I wanted to be" or "I will be." "I AM."

The Ayatollah is dead and he is not coming back. The same can be said for Mohammed, Buddha et al. Only Jesus said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead and behold, I am alive for evermore." Revelation 1:18) Jesus came back from the dead and one day He will come back again as Judge (II Corinthians 5:10), and Khomeini and Mohammed and Buddha and you and I shall kneel down and worship Him (Romans 14:11). Jesus lives. Serve Him today.

--Via Four State Gospel News, Neosho, MO 64850.

The Local Church

By Jackie M. Stearsman

The Gospel leads those who respect and follow it to place a great emphasis upon the local church. Acts of Apostles records the planting of local churches in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and throughout the world. Epistles were written to local congregations and to individuals who were laboring to build up the kingdom of Christ through the local churches.

Nurture

It is in the local church that God intended for souls to be fed, overseen (protected and guided), to gain maturity through exercise and experience, and to be returned to spiritual health if diseased (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 5:11-14; Galatians 6:1-10; James 5:19-20).

The master of deception knows that if the local church can be destroyed the power of the Gospel may be thwarted.

There are no souls who have grown to maturity but what have been directly involved in a local congregation.

Depreciate the local congregation in the minds of people and the cause of truth suffers.

Preachers need to know that they are doing a great work when they are toiling to develop the local congregation.

Local congregations need to understand and to appreciate their role in the saving of souls by nurturing and bringing to maturity souls.

Influence

Through the local church God intended to make an impact upon the world of sin. The church in Thessalonica, with the Power of the Gospel working through it, was known to be doing this (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

Fellowship in the furtherance of the Gospel was the very life of the local church in Phillippi (Phillippian 1:5; 4:15-16).

The stronger the local congregation the greater the impact upon the world. Weaken the local church and the influence upon the world will be minimized.

Conquer

If the local church is to realize its fullest potential in the Gospel it must overcome every foe. Like the Church at Ephesus it must overcome any loss of its first love. (Revelation 2:7). If called upon to suffer, as was Smyrna, that suffering must be endured if it is to overcome (Revelation 2:11). With Pergamum, it must overcome religious error and false doctrine when such surfaces (Revelation 2:17). If "Jezebel" types (or doctrines) arise, like in Thyatira this too must be overcome (Revelation 2:26). Should the local church become dead, as was the case at Sardis, it is counseled to overcome (Revelation 3:5). When presented with opportunities (an open door), there must be courageous faith to overcome the foes of Satan as surely as did the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:12). Luke-warmness destroys the potential of the local church, and where this sin exists the Lord's message of overcoming written to Laodicea is to be recalled and applied Revelation 3:21).

Conclusion

All who believe and respect the gospel as the power of God unto salvation must understand and

appreciate the role of the local congregation. The Lord's admonition stands: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the church-

es."

Via - The Harvesters - 1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33803.

The Essentiality Of Assembling Together



Raymond Elliott

is a misunderstanding and a disregard of the intent of God when men abstain from the assemblies of the Lord's people. The corporate worship of the body of believers is not the whole of Christianity; nevertheless, assembling together is necessary for the spiritual growth and welfare of the individual disciple. It has never been the design and purpose of God for his followers to isolate themselves from other children of God. One can readily read of the various assemblies under the Mosaic economy and to learn the necessity of such (Exodus 5:1, 3; 12:6; Deuteronomy 16:8).

A proper investigation of the disciples of Christ will determine that various assemblies were in evidence in the first century. At the beginning of the church in Jerusalem you can read in Acts 2:44: "All that believed were together . . ." Following the first persecution, saints "gathered together" (Acts 4:31). It is recorded in Acts 11:26 that Barnabas and Saul assembled themselves with the church for a year in order to teach the brethren. After the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and "gathered the church together" to rehearse all that God had done by them (Acts 12:27). All Bible students are aware that the early Christians met upon "the first day of the week" to break bread, that is, to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). In fact, when Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth, he admonished them to give as God had prospered them "upon the first day of the week" (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2). He knew that they were already meeting on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper because he mentioned this fact earlier in chapter 11. Notice in 11:18: "For first of all, when ye come together in the church (meet as a congregation) . . ." Again in 11:20: "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together . . ." In chapter 14:23: "If therefore the whole church be assembled together . . ."

The fact was, one sure way to denote a Christian who was becoming unfaithful to Christ was in their habitual absence from the assemblies of the saints. Please study carefully the context in which

An indispensable ingredient of the Christian life is to congregate with those of like precious faith for the purposes of worshiping God and to edify and exhort one another. God, in his infinite wisdom, created man to be a social being, that is, in need of fellowship with other men. It

you find Hebrews 10:24, 25. In our assemblies, we can exhort one another in the matter of love, good works and, in short, faithful Christian living. Even in our songs we can teach and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16). Redeemed people find joy, strength and security in coming together to praise God the Father and the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Expressions of gratitude, honor, homage and devotion are natural for one whose heart is filled with love for God because of our salvation, blessed assurance and the hope of eternal life. It is God's desire that we worship him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

--104 Rosewood Drive, Prattville, AL 36067.

It has never been the design and purpose of God for his followers to isolate themselves from other children of God.

On Greener Grass



Dalton Key

Not long ago, I caught a glimpse of a bumper sticker which said, "The grass next door may be greener, but it's just as hard to cut."

Now think about that for a moment.

Our feelings of envy and jealousy might leave us forever if we were able to see the reality of the other person's life from their perspective. All we see is the glitter, the frills, the outer trappings of those the world would call successful. But what lies beneath?

Are the rich always happy, secure and content? Did their riches come by accident? or was hard work involved?

Many have traded their health, their families, and their very soul for the things of this world. Would we be willing to trade places with them?

Those who appear successful, are generally a success in only a few small facets of life- sometimes, only in one. Would we really want to trade lives, dollar for dollar, problem for problem, heartache for heartache?

No, most of us would like the seeming "rewards"

Was Ananias A Mistaken Disciple?



W. A. Holley

had stood by watching the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58-59). Later, "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and desired from him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound into Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2).

Acts 26:9-11 reads as follows: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad and against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Later, circa A.D. 65, Paul wrote of some horrible incidents, saying, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Timothy 1:13). Paul declared: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1), thus indicating that one can possess a good conscience even though one is wrong.

Saul saw a light, was struck blind, and heard a voice, on the Damascus road; but he was not converted to Christ there. "And as he (Saul) journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined around about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying

The story of the conversion of Saul (later called Paul) is one of the most fantastic stories ever told. The reader will find the full account of how Saul was converted in Acts, chapters 9, 22, and 26. We sincerely urge our readers to peruse these chapters very closely.

Saul was very much against Jesus Christ and his church. He

unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling, and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:3-6).

Saul was three days in Damascus, "without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9), before he heard from the Lord again.

The Lord Jesus did not tell Saul what to do to be saved; rather, he sent Ananias, "a certain disciple," to instruct him in the Lord's will and way. Jesus commanded the apostles (earthen vessels), not angels, to preach the gospel to sinful men (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; II Corinthians 4:7). Hence, Jesus used Ananias to teach Saul his truth.

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias." (Notice the vision comes to the preacher, not to the sinner). "And he said, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hands on him, that he might receive his sight" (Acts 9:12). Ananias strongly objected to the Lord's command ordering him to go to Saul (Acts 9:13-16).

When Ananias finally came unto Saul, what did he say? Read Acts 22:12-16: "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness

unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Saul was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins. . . ." Did Ananias misinform Saul? Millions of denominational preachers, down through the ages, have so asserted. Denominational people argue that sinners are saved by "faith alone," or by a miracle, or by prayer; or, that God determined it all before men were born. Ananias, a person especially chosen to instruct Saul, never said a single word concerning these denominational dogmas . . . Not one word!!

The denominational world says that baptism cannot wash away sins. Again, we ask, Was Ananias in error? Was he misguided? Was he wrong? No, not by any stretch of the imagination!!

"Preacher, don't you know that it is Jesus' blood that washes away sins?" asks someone. Yes, of course. Jesus' blood was shed in his death. We shall quote John 19:33-34: "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." These verses show that Jesus shed his blood IN HIS DEATH. But to appropriate the benefits of Jesus' shed blood, one must be baptized INTO HIS DEATH: "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" (Romans 6:3-4). Verily, one is washed in the blood when one is washed in the waters of baptism (Revelation 1:5; 7:14). An obedient faith which includes baptism is the means by which we contact the cleansing blood of the Lamb.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

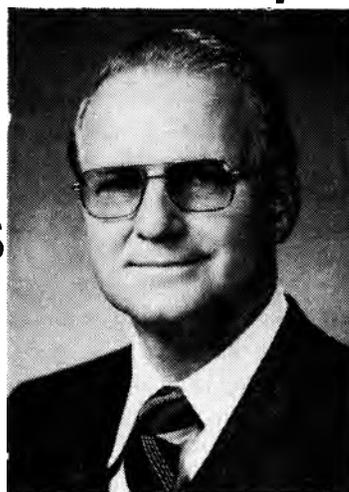
On Greener Grass

Continued From Page 3

without having to pay the price.

Perhaps we'd be better off to live our own lives, to be content with our own blessings, and leave the baser sins of envy and jealousy to those small enough to enjoy them. Remember the words of Paul: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

Perhaps we'd be better off to live our own lives, to be content with our own blessings, and leave the baser sins of envy and jealousy to those small enough to enjoy them.



Bobby Key

which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job 15:16). "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

As we look at the eternal benefits Christianity has conferred upon us, and the rich inheritance it proposes to confer in the world to come, the little that poor mortal man can do in such a short life sinks into nothingness, and deserves no credit. Anyone who will take the time to think of all God has done for an undeserving race sees his own accomplishments dwindle into complete insignificance.

Unprofitable Servants

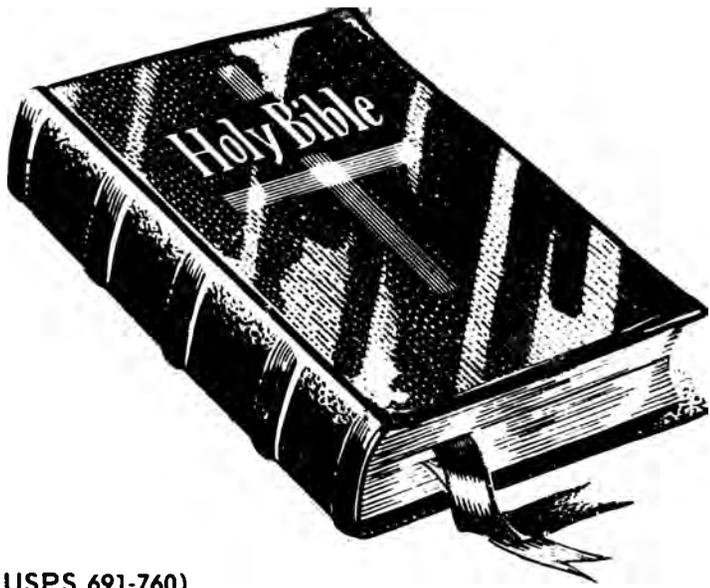
Oh, why should mortal man be proud? Of what do we have to boast? "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). God made man upright, but he soon went astray (Ecclesiastes 7:29). In heaven's sight man is but a mere worm (Job 25:6). "How much more abominable and filthy is man,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). If God permits us to enter heaven it will not be because of any works of merit we have performed -- it will be through His great mercy.

Jesus reminds us that after we have done our duty -- after we have done our best -- we are still unprofitable. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10). We have never done anything worthy of our boasting. To God we owe eternal gratitude, praise and thanksgiving. It is a marvel that He has received us and permitted us to labor in the greatest cause on earth. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15). To the name of God goes all of our honor and praise forever.

--324 17th S.W. Miami, OK 74354.

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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VOLUME 25

SEPTEMBER 15, 1989

NUMBER 37

Fewer Entering The Ministry

Dowell Flatt

"Why are not the Christian colleges and preacher training schools turning out more preachers?" Bible Department chairmen hear this question regularly. The question is a good one because the present number of Bible majors in our schools is about 50 percent fewer than 20 years ago.

Though the colleges and preacher training schools will have a role to play in changing this situation, the Christian home and the local congregation will have to set the stage. Before they get to college, the majority have already made a decision concerning their life's work.

Though the colleges and preacher training schools will have a role to play in changing this situation, the Christian home and the local congregation will have to set the stage.

Freed-Hardeman, with roots going back to 1869, has long been known as an institution which helps train preachers. In the fall of 1988, the F-HC student body numbered 1,169 with 98 Bible majors. An objective survey was conducted among these majors. The results are very interesting.

1. The men in the survey come from seven countries: the Bahamas, Jamaica, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa, and the United States. Twenty-one states in the U.S. were represented. Students came from Montana to Florida and from California to West Virginia.

2. Sixty-nine percent had begun by the age of sixteen to think about being a preacher. Eighty-three percent had thought of it by the end of high school. Only 11 percent after the age of 21 first thought about being a preacher.

3. Twenty-four percent said that they had really decided by the age of sixteen to become a minister. Fifty-nine percent had decided by the age of eighteen. Two years of sixteen to eighteen seem to be critical. Many long-range decisions are made during this short span.

4. Twelve percent decided to preach while in grammar school. Forty-eight percent chose to be a minister during the high school years. Thirty-three percent made the decision during college; only seven percent decided after college.

5. Thirty percent said that their fathers had influenced them to become a minister. Twenty-five percent said that it was the local preacher. The mother was listed by thirteen percent and a missionary by six percent. Only two percent said that it was an elder. That last figure should cause sadness among us.

6. Thirty-two percent of their fathers were preachers. Six percent were elders.

7. The next question was quite revealing: "Were gospel preachers generally (A) praised in your home, or (B) criticized in your home?" Eighty percent said that they were praised.

8. The following question was interesting: "When you decided to preach, were your parents (A) encouraging to you, (B) neutral, or (C) discouraging to you?" Seventy-three percent checked encouraging. Only seven percent checked discouraging.

9. The same question was asked about the home congregation. Seventy percent said that the local church was encouraging; only six percent listed discouraging.

10. The students were asked about how many preachers had come from the home congregation during the last ten years. Forty-six percent checked one or more. That answer is very disturbing.

11. Twenty percent had come from a rural congregation; eighteen percent came from a town of less than 10,000. Only ten percent came from cities of more than 500,000.

12. Sixty percent thought that their parents were happily married. Another eighteen percent thought that their parents were fairly happy. Twenty percent came from homes where the parents were either separated or divorced.

13. Nineteen percent said that the annual family income was less than \$10,000. Another twenty-one percent stated that it was less than \$20,000. Only four percent came from families where the yearly income was above \$50,000.

Some key observations can be seen from this

data.

A. If we expect to grow more preachers, we must begin to plant this precious seed into the hearts of young boys.

B. When a young man decides to preach, there must be encouragement from his home and his home congregation.

C. Fathers and local preachers greatly influence young men to become preachers.

D. Elders need to provide more encouragement for young men to preach.

E. Happy homes will continue to produce more ministers.

F. Families with larger incomes need to help produce more preachers.

May these preachers have that burning fire in their bones that will not be contained (Jeremiah 20:9). They can have an effect on eternity!

--Chairman, Bible Department, Freed-Hardeman College Henderson, TN 38340.

Preacher, Preach!



Cecil May, Jr.

Much of what takes place from behind today's pulpits is not preaching. Here are some examples of non-preaching:

*Opinion is presented for consideration, rather than the word of God being proclaimed

to be believed.

*A passage is explained and expounded, but no call for change is given.

*A text is read, but what is said in the sermon has no relationship to what the text says.

Continued On Page 2

Words Of Truth

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David Wade . . . Editor
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Preacher, Preach!

Continued From Page 1

*Comments are made on the present political or social scene, but no Biblical moral imperative is heard.

*Confused and unrelated statements, witty in themselves, are made, but no coherent point or application binds them together.

*Twenty to thirty minutes of brilliant repartee and uplifting speech is heard, but the word of God is never opened or made known.

Preaching has the word of God for its content and a change of mind, heart and will for its aim. God's word is spoken with the humility of one who knows it is by God's grace that he stands, and with the boldness of one who knows he has received grace and is to speak it with the authority of God himself.

The preacher needs the preparation and organization of a good lecturer, the information and techniques of an able classroom teacher, but he has not preached unless he also brings a challenge to change or an inspiration to act.

Many regular church goers today, I fear, never hear preaching. Many who draw a regular paycheck as a preacher never preach.

Proclaim Christ. Refute error with truth. Challenge sin with righteousness. Herald the good news. Commend God's love. Command man's obedience.

Preacher, preach!

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Reaching The Elderly



David Wade

[Editor's note: This material was published in the 1983 Magnolia Bible College Lectures.]

From time to time there have been articles published, usually in church bulletins, which suggest that older people rarely ever obey the gospel. These are usually offered to demonstrate to the young why they should obey the gospel in their youth. They should! However, I know of no valid scientific research behind such statistics. Unfortunately, this information leaves the impression that almost all older people are "set in their ways" and because of their "hardness of heart" few, if any, will ever obey the gospel. While this may tell part of the story, we must remember that hardness of heart is not the exclusive territory of the older person. Such ill-founded information is likely to discourage efforts in evangelizing the elderly.

Furthermore, such negative information does not reflect to what extent evangelism among the elderly is a neglected ministry. Could it be that there are not many converts among the elderly because there are not many members actively trying to convert them? Some Christians are convinced that the success rate is so very low that there is no reason for trying. By comparison there is much emphasis on youth evangelism, campus evangelism, singles groups, and young adults. However, the available literature dealing with religion and the older person usually assumes that the elderly person under discussion is already a member of the church. The observation of this writer, and of many others, is that older people will respond to the gospel in about the same proportion as of any other age group.

Why Should We Try To Convert The Elderly?

First, we should be reminded that they are eternally lost without Christ. They must respond to the gospel which is God's only power to save anyone (Romans 1:16). There is great joy to behold one who is outwardly perishing being renewed day by day (II Corinthians 4:16).

Second, in many cases the elderly have experience and expertise that is valuable to the work of the church. The elderly should be encouraged to be involved in all aspects of church work.

Third, those who demonstrate spiritual maturity have a teaching ministry to fulfill both by example and by word (Titus 2:1-5).

Fourth, new converts are usually excited about introducing friends and family to the gospel. In some cases, the elderly show less apprehension

and hesitance in talking with someone about his soul.

Fifth, we must face the fact that we have the equal responsibility of presenting the gospel to the elderly as we do to the younger generation.

When Is The Best Time To Reach The Elderly?

Now is the time to reach anyone who is lost! However, there are crucial times and situations that arise which may enhance the opportunity of reaching the elderly with the gospel. Any crisis, calamity, or sudden change in one's life may increase the chances of the personal worker to show how the gospel is the only answer to life's great needs.

For many, the immediate period around retirement, with all its changes and adjustments, presents a great opportunity to reach the retiree. Other factors such as financial crisis, extended illness, the loss of a mate, child, or other family member, a move, loss of physical ability, and such like may serve as the personal workers' cue to reach the older person.

There is also the fear of rejection and exclusion from the way of life they have known. There is the fear of becoming a burden to others, and the fear of becoming useless to anyone. Questions about immorality and feelings of guilt and remorse may increase with age and may prompt the older person to seek Biblical answers. Situations like these may present an optimum opportunity for the personal worker to introduce the older person to the gospel.

We should be reminded that opportunities unused are soon lost -- often lost forever. Jesus cautions, "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35). [To be continued]

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The Ministry Of Study

Jack P. Lewis

A short time ago I picked up a publicity folder from a school which described the various community services in which its students participated. Some were engaged in the ministry of singing, of teaching, of visitation, and others were preaching. Some were in a ministry to the sick and some to the poor, some ministered in the inner city and some to the suburbs; but the caption which caught my eye was one over a student at work at his desk. It read "The Ministry of Study."

Many people seem to feel that study is one of the optional activities of preaching to be engaged in by a few individuals queer enough to enjoy it. Or, if not optional, at the best it is a necessary evil to which only a minimal amount of time should be devoted. Some vigorously resist learning anything new and others seem to feel that depth of study endangers the soul. What a striking idea the brochure had: "The Ministry of Study."

While some men still take pride in their lack of training, long ago the rabbis said that no one is as poor as is the ignoramus.¹ They also said that the Torah is not a crown with which to adorn one's self nor is it a spade with which to dig.² That is to say, that study is to be thought of neither as a means of self-aggrandizement nor as a mere way to gain a livelihood. Today I would like to challenge you to think of your study as a ministry rendered in service to God.

I. The Battle for the Minds of Men

Our world is gripped as never before in a gigantic struggle for control of the minds of men. In this struggle what will eventually win out? Will it be materialism, communism, catholicism, some denominational system, or will it be the Truth of God? What sort of world will tomorrow's world be?

Our congregations are growing, but we are faced with a rapidly increasing world population which is expanding much more rapidly, percentage wise, than is Christianity. Unless the trend is reversed and the advance of Christianity stepped up, the world of tomorrow will not be a Christian world.

Coupled with the increase in world population there is also a rapidly rising educational level of the world public and especially of the American public. In the small Texas town in which I grew up I do not recall there being any person in town with a Ph.D degree. Only a decided minority had been to college. Out of my graduating class of thirty-five, perhaps six to ten went on to college. The small college I attended had at that time only three or four Ph.D's on its entire staff and they were regarded with special respect for their attainments. In the same school today most departments would have more men than that with the Ph.D degree. And so it is in all our society; the educational trend is upward with no signs of leveling off. In the pioneer days any man could come out of the corn field and start preaching. Great sacrifices were made and great service was rendered by these men, but the day has passed in America when any sizeable number of people will listen to the corn field preacher.

Paul said, we struggle "to take every thought captive to obey Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). We in the church cannot afford to write off as a total loss the educated segment of our population. Yet, a short time back I heard a man say of preaching, "All you need to preach is a few Scriptures and the gift of gab." I doubt we are going to make much

progress in this ideological war in which we are involved if God's servants as their training have only "a few Scriptures and the gift of gab." In contrast to this shortsighted attitude Bacon said:

"Let no man out of a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God's Word, or in the book of God's works; divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress of proficiency in both."³

II. Your Place, as a Student, in the War

If you are now students there will probably be no other time in your life when you will have equal time and opportunity to read the books and get the equipment that one needs to be an effective proclaimer of the Word of God. It is easy to say that time will be more available when you graduate, but that is a delusion. I regularly encounter the student who is so involved in part-time employment, who is so excited about getting to the mission field that he has no time to study. He reminds me of a story one of my friends tells of a man cutting weeds with a dull hoe who insisted that he had too many weeds to cut to be able to take out time to sharpen his hoe. Though they affirm personal willingness to go where the Lord would have them go, to make whatever sacrifice may be needed, and to face untold dangers if they arise, for many men the discipline of the study desk is just not what they have in mind.

There are many students of whose ideals and dreams I approve, but I cannot get very excited about their achieving them because of the careless school work they are doing now. Elton Trueblood has said that we may well question the genuineness of the Christian experience of the student who says he is a Christian but who will not get his work in on time. The man who cannot take time to prepare himself is dooming himself to a life of frustration. He becomes like a carpenter trying to cut a 2x4 with a coping saw or trying to drive a spike with a tack hammer.

The rabbis said that for the duty to leave the corners of fields unharvested, for gleanings, and for loving deeds there are no prescribed limits in the Law.⁴ I would add to that list that "for study" there is no limit. My younger son at an earlier stage in his schooling had somewhat the attitude that study is confined to the three problems the teacher had assigned for the next day. The library might be full of books he has not read, but there was no possibility of his doing more than the three problems. Students will say, "I have your lecture notes" as though that is all they needed. Is education merely what you can get as the lecture goes by? One has said, "The physical resource for Christian spirituality most open to all seminaries is the library." And again, "However, a richly endowed library will be of little use unless there is an awareness on the part of students of how the collection should be used."⁵

One of the rabbis said, "A man can only obtain knowledge by sacrifice."⁶ You must apply the seat of your pants to a chair for long periods of time.

The record you make in school is extremely important. All future academic admissions, as far as you are concerned, will be determined by it. All scholarship applications will be decided by it. Wise future employers will look it over before they hire you, and when you ask one of your teachers

for a recommendation (which you will want to do) he will first think of your school fidelity. This is the period in which lifelong habits are formed. "He that is faithful in little is faithful in much." As H. R. Niebuhr said:

"A theological education which does not lead young men and women to embark on a continuous, ever-incomplete but ever-sustained effort to study and to understand the meaning of their work and of the situations in which they labor is neither theological nor education."⁷ Long ago a wise man said, "What thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Think of your study program as a "ministry of study" rendered to God.

III. A Lifelong Program of Self-improvement

The preacher needs to plan for a life which involves a ministry of study. Yet one of the preachers in our town openly states that he does not like to study, and all about him would say that his preaching reflects it.

Someone has compared studying and preaching to putting water into a tank. At studying you fill the tank with a one inch pipe; when speaking you are letting it out with a ten inch pipe. Personally I have felt the incoming pipe in my case was about a one-fourth inch one. A well-prepared sermon may take as much as twenty hours spent in its preparation. When young and vivacious the magnetism of personality gets you a hearing; but when you get older, what will you offer?

Never mind how brilliant he is, a man's judgment is only as good as his information. "The reward of study is understanding."⁸ As a preacher, there needs to be a time in your schedule, not directly related to sermon preparation, when you are not available for the telephone -- a time when your wife and children are not running in and out carrying on a conversation -- a time in which you will sharpen up your Greek and Hebrew. Have you ever thought of the presumption there is in passing yourself off as an interpreter of a book that you cannot read? You need a time to sharpen up the areas of Biblical knowledge in which you have competency. The preacher should primarily be an expert in Scripture -- yet how often this fails to be true! You need a time to widen your knowledge into areas where you perhaps are not yet competent: church history, the world of the Bible, social problems, and philosophy. It is much easier to spend your time in "administrivia," in gabbing, and in coffee drinking than in honest labor -- the "ministry of study."

"Let us press on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3). "He that ministers, let him give himself to his ministry" (Romans 12:7).

Notes

¹T. B. Ned. 62a.

²M. Ned. 40:1.

³Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, First Book, 1, 3.

⁴T. J. Peah 1 No. 1.

⁵C. Feilding, *Education for the Ministry* (Dayton: American Assoc. Theol. Schools, 1966), pp. 171, 94.

⁶T. B. Berakoth 60:3.

⁷H. R. Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry* (New York: Harper, 1956), p. 134.

⁸M. Berakoth 5.

--Harding University, Graduate School of Religion Memphis, TN.

A Role Model For Preachers

Tom Steed

Every gospel preacher has given consideration to himself and his work trying to ascertain his task and evaluate his performance. I Thessalonians 1:1-2:13 is a very applicable passage describing the attitudes, activities and characteristics that should be associated with a faithful minister.

This scripture presents a model of success. Paul's work produced outstanding results. The church at Thessalonica became a springboard for the gospel in the world.

A reader catches a glimpse of the nature of Paul's ministry in chapter one. He begins his letter by giving emphasis to his prayer on their behalf and he is quick to inform them that he continues to pray for them. Many problems in today's congregations would be lessened or eliminated if there was a knowledge that the preacher had the congregation in his prayers and that he thanked God for them.

Paul freely commends the Thessalonians for the praiseworthy characteristics in their lives. It was easy for him to appeal to them, because he personally had brought forth fruit among them. Bringing forth fruit in a place will endear converts and Christians alike.

Paul indicates that his manner of life among the Thessalonians was for their benefit. His way of life was calculated to be in their best interests. Every preacher would do well to recognize what Paul acknowledges, that "ye became followers of us and of the Lord." It is a fact that a minister's influence is mirrored in the lives of his congregation. Paul realized that people followed him as well as the Lord. Ministers cannot afford the luxury of, "Do as I say, not as I do." It just does not work that way. A minister's manner of life is as important as his message.

Ministers cannot afford the luxury of, "Do as I say, not as I do." It just does not work that way. A minister's manner of life is as important as his message.

Paul and his companions strove to be above reproach in their dealings. He did not hesitate to remind the Thessalonians that "holily, justly, and unblameably" were the proper words to describe his behavior among them. He was well aware that his behavior was as influential as his message.

Paul indicates that the Thessalonian Christians followed his example and that of his companions and the example of Judean churches. The Thessalonians then became examples for the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia.

In chapter two he goes on to describe the characteristics of this manner of life. It contains the coarse as well as the soft, the stern as well as the soothing. It is a distinct responsibility to preach God's word in its entirety and give it the same emphasis and proportion that the Bible gives it.

Gentleness and severity are evident in Paul's preaching. He did not shrink from proclaiming the gospel in boldness and controversy. He makes it plain that difficulties were encountered and that he

readily accepted them. The church in Thessalonica had a very stormy beginning. But Paul's efforts contributed to shift moods from controversy to gentleness -- even as a nurse among children.

Knowing when to be gentle and when to be severe requires a good deal of wisdom. Both qualities were present in Paul's ministry. There is no doubt that the truths of God's word were spoken plainly and boldly. Paul makes it clear that he was intent upon pleasing God and not man. His speech did not include flattering words calculated to produce the glory of men. Yet distinction must be made between flattering words and deserved compliments. Paul complimented the Thessalonians and gave thanks for them, but he used no flattery -- no vain, empty words.

Paul describes his care and concern for the congregation in very emotional terms. He compares their relationship to that of a father and his children. He had a very clear image of himself looking out for the well being of fellow Christians. There is a wealth of information in the statement that he acted as their nurse. He did not mechanically fulfill duties toward them, but he demonstrated a feeling of concern about their well-being, he cherished them, as a nurse cherisheth her children.

The second figure used to describe Paul's relationship to the Thessalonians is that of a father exhorting, comforting and charging his children. Exhortation is an integral part of a preacher's work. It is urging someone to do what he knows is right and then reminding him to do so. Paul says he also comforted them. Correction, often necessary, is far more effective when comforting has preceded it. A

congregation can endure harshness when it has felt warmth.

Paul did not view his preaching as slave labor but says, "we were allowed to be put in trust with the gospel." Each preacher should see his task as a gift of God which he is privileged to enjoy, not required to endure. One who is entrusted with a small amount of money exercises great care in accounting for it. How much more diligently should one care when his trust is the gospel.

A preacher can discover the key to being loved and revered in his congregation in I Thessalonians 2:8. Paul says, "we were affectionately desirous of you. We were willing to have imparted unto you not the gospel of God only, but our own souls because ye were dear to us." When a preacher is willing to impart himself to the congregation, when his love for the brethren is evident in his actions and message, then he is following the gospel preacher tradition of Paul. Paul labored night and day on behalf of the Thessalonians. The labor of a modern preacher can be no less. Personal time and time for families is not excluded; but when a faithful minister is needed, he will act unselfishly, diligently, and intently.

Is it any wonder that Paul was able to thank God again for the faith of this congregation? When a faithful minister can truly care for his congregation, bear fruit among them, make his concern and gratitude for them known, speak God's truths in gentleness and severity, and live a life of example before them, then he too will have something to thank God for.

--Via Firm Foundation, Sept. 2, 1980.

Always In Grace?

Bob Lauderdale

What about falling from grace? We mean by the statement, "falling from grace," just this: that once a person has been saved, and then loses that salvation by sinning against God. Is this possible? Some say no. Or is the reverse true? Can a Christian fall from grace?

The answer to this question must come from the authority of God, the Bible. It is true that there are passages which seem to indicate that this is true. For instance, a favorite passage of those who hold this persuasion, is John 10:29, "My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." But is this assurance that of the impossibility of apostasy? An examination of the context will show that Jesus here is teaching that no one is able to so overcome God as to remove a person from his secure place in the Father's hand. God is able "to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (I Timothy 1:12). There is indeed security if we only consider God's ability. But the passage does not negate the fact that the ONE IN the Father's hand can himself so sin as to lose his place of security in the Father's hand; he himself can, by his own action, sin and be lost. When a person has been saved by obedience to the gospel, he does not become a robot, having no will of his own, but, even after salvation, remains a free moral agent, subject to the temptations common to man, and to the "fiery darts of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16), and to give in to these temptations,

and not repent, is to lose one's soul.

Think on these verses: "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:22); or, "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it under bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (I Corinthians 9:26, 27); or, "Ye ARE SEVERED FROM Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; YE ARE FALLEN AWAY FROM GRACE" (Galatians 5:4); etc. So many more could be given.

Suffice it to say: the doctrine of "the impossibility of apostasy" is a doctrine of Satan himself. Let us not be tempted and overcome!

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"I am not mad, most men
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—Acts 26:25

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VOLUME 25

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Flee Fornication (Part I)



Bobby Duncan

[Editor's note: Brother Bobby Duncan delivered this lesson at the 1988 Words of Truth Lectureship. I'm happy to commend this much needed lesson to you].

The subject of fornication, of course, is a very, very delicate subject. It is a Bible

Consequently, there is a literal epidemic of fornication in the church of our Lord. The church has been infected, Bible class teachers have been infected, deacons have been infected, elders have been infected and their wives, and yes, preachers have become guilty of the sin of fornication.

For centuries heathen ethics have put the three physical appetites, hunger, thirst, and sexual desire on exactly the very same level.

We need to be warned of the terribleness the sin of fornication. We need to know what the Bible teaches one must do if he has been guilty of that sin in order to receive forgiveness of the sin. I am not presenting this lesson to cause anybody who might have been guilty of the sin of fornication in the past, and who has become ashamed of that and repented of it, who has obtained God's pardon for that, to feel guilty. I am not trying to make anybody feel guilty who has obtained God's pardon for some mistake that he has committed in the past. But I would like to make those who may be guilty of any sin, feel guilty and uncomfortable in committing that sin until that one guilty of sin does repent, is ashamed of his sin, and does seek the pardon of God.

Now, let me give you a word of warning: Whenever someone in whom you have a great deal of confidence, slips and falls, makes some mistake, you may be tempted to say, "well nobody is living right." That is just exactly what the devil would like for you to do. He would like for you to throw up your hands and say, "Well, there's no use. Everybody is living a sinful life; nobody is trying to live right." But God doesn't want you to believe that. Don't get the Elijah complex. In I Kings 19

Elijah had reached the point that he was convinced he was the only one serving the Lord faithfully. He said, "I, I only am left." But God told him two things. He said, (1) you have work to do and you need to get up and get busy doing that work. You need to go and anoint a king over Syria, then you need to anoint a king over Israel, then you need to appoint a prophet to take your place, because you are about to leave this earth. (2) God said you need to understand that I still have seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. We need to understand that despite the fact that sometimes people in whom we have a great deal of confidence, fall, slip, make mistakes, they betray our confidence, in some cases turn out to be downright hypocrites, that there are still plenty of people who are still doing the will of God. There are still some who are serving the Lord very, very faithfully. In I Corinthians 6:9 beginning, the apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God." But then in the next verse he said, "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." There is such as a thing as a person's having been guilty of sin in the past, sought God's forgiveness, obtained God's mercy and God's pardon, and therefore, should not feel guilty any more because he has been forgiven of that sin.

In our lesson I want to raise the question, "What is fornication?" The word *fornication* is from the Greek word, *porneia* from which we get our word *pornography*. It is used in the noun form in the New Testament some 26 times, and every time it

subject and it is one upon which a great deal of teaching needs to be done. I will do the very best I can to use good judgment and good taste to keep our study on a very high plane, but in order for this lesson to be effective, it will be necessary for me to use very plain language. So I beg you to be very patient with me as I try to present the truth in a manner that will be pleasing to God and in a manner that will do the most possible good.

For centuries heathen ethics have put the three physical appetites, hunger, thirst, and sexual desire on exactly the very same level. If one is hungry, he chooses some way to satisfy that hunger, and just so long as what he chooses does not hurt him or anyone else, it is alright. If he is thirsty, he looks for something to drink to slake his thirst, and drinks whatever he chooses, so long as whatever he chooses doesn't create any problems for him or anyone else. If he has sexual desires then he satisfies those desires in whatever way he chooses, so long as the satisfaction of those desires does not infringe on the rights and privileges of anyone else, and so long as he himself is not harmed or damaged in the satisfaction of those desires. This, of course, is the ethic that has been sold to millions of people in America, and unfortunately, to thousands of members of the church of Christ.

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Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

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"Real Men"

Dave Miller

A few years ago a book made the bestseller list that was entitled "Real Men Don't Eat Quiche." The book was a discussion of the author's views concerning the qualities and characteristics (e.g., clothing, food, etc.) constitute demonstrations of true manhood. Have you ever stopped to consider how God defines "real men"?

In God's sight, "real men" are first and foremost dedicated and active Christians who take the time to interact with people who need to be loved and influenced for good. Consequently, they do not merely work their eight hour shift, come home and put their feet up, and commence to "rule the castle" to the neglect of the important emotional, spiritual and psychological needs of their family and friends.

"Real men" do not whine when things in their lives do not go smoothly or to their liking, and they sure do not put the blame on their wives and everybody else. Adam was weak and unmanly in this regard. Where was he when his wife needed to be cared for, shielded and protected from the snake? Why did he follow her lead and partake of the fruit at her urging? Why did he then blame his behavior on God and his wife? As head of the house, he should have considered himself responsible for the spiritual direction of his marriage and led his wife in their obedience to God. Instead, he "listened to his wife" (Genesis 3:17) and shirked his God-given responsibilities.

"Real men" do not relinquish their responsibilities to their wives, the church, or society. They understand that if things are not going well in the home, as head of the family, THEY are responsible. They realize that, as fathers, it is their task to see that the children are properly trained and instilled with spiritual principles and emotional stability (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21). Consequently, they do not blame their wives, or the leaders in the church, or the government, or the societal environment when problems develop in the home. Rather, they "take the bull by the horns," lovingly and gently striving to mold their families into the

Continued On Page 3

The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Reaching The Elderly Part II



David Wade

"What was responsible for your coming to Christ and this church?" they replied as follows:

Special need	2%
Walk In	3%
Preacher	6%
Visitation	1%
Sunday School	5%
Evangelistic Crusade	0.5%
Program	3%
Friend/Relative	79% ¹

A survey of a large group of Christians in Memphis, Tennessee, revealed they were reached in the following ways:

House to House	1.8%
Newspaper Advertising	1.8%
Campaigns for Christ	1.8%
Friend/Relative	94.6% ²

Regardless of who does the research or where it is done, it all points to the fact that individuals are influenced most by friends and relatives.

We should never minimize good and scriptural methods of the personal worker or church outreach programs. However, these surveys emphasize that the initial contact and predominant influence that brings one under the sound of the gospel is most often a friend or relative. Friendship evangelism was demonstrated when Andrew recruited his brother, Peter, and Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus (John 2:35-50). Friendship evangelism can enhance and facilitate any method or program we may use.

Herein lies a great ministry for the older members of the congregation. They should be encouraged and activated to reach their friends and relatives, especially those in their age bracket. Elders, deacons, and preachers should encourage this good work and participate in it where possible. As converts are made, they in turn put us in touch with additional contacts, and so the process perpetuates itself.

How should we proceed in reaching the elderly? I know of no approach that is more effective than evangelizing among our friends or relatives. Mr. Win Arn, president of the Institute for American Church Growth, reports that when over 10,000 were asked

As the prospect is being introduced to the gospel, the Christian worker should also seek to get the prospect to attend the Bible classes, worship services, and other group related activities of the church. Flavil Yeakley concludes from his research that: "When a person has no meaningful personal contact with the congregation in the process of his conversion, he is likely to feel no meaningful sense of identification with the congregation after his conversion and therefore, he is likely to drop out."³

Brother Yeakley emphasizes that this should not be taken as a condemnation of the cottage meeting method of evangelism. In his survey most of the converts who stayed converted were influenced through cottage meetings. The principal difference was that they were also influenced by the group related activities such as Bible classes, worship services, and social activities with members of the church.

Since fear of loneliness and isolation is often prevalent among the aged, it should work to the friend's advantage to involve the prospects, who are physically able, in the group related activities of the church. We should recognize the dynamics of the assemblies where love, concern, and mutual support can be extended to all. It is the context of the assembled church and the preached word that Paul said the unbeliever will "worship God and report that God is truly among you!" (I Corinthians 14:23-25). (To be continued).

¹Charles Arn, Donald McGavran and Win Arn, *Growth: A New Vision for Sunday School* (Pasadena, CA: Church Growth Press, 1980), p. 76.

²Ivan Stewart, "Friendship Evangelism," *Let The Earth Hear His Voice* (Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1979), p. 138.

³Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., *Why Churches Grow*, 3rd ed. (Aurora, Colorado: Christians Communications, Inc., 1979), p. 66.

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"Real Men"

Continued From Page 2

strong domestic units that God intends them to be.

"Real men" are motivated more by their spiritual capacity which has been nurtured and guided by God's written revelation. Consequently, they do not live life dominated by their physical appetites and lusts. Samson's life was fraught with turmoil, unhappiness and misery because he lived to gratify his own desires instead of learning the lesson of unselfishness. The selfish tone which dominated his entire life is reflected in a statement which he made at the very beginning of his adulthood: "Get her for me; for she pleases me well" (Judges 14:3). "Real men" rise above their own sensual desires.

"Real men" put their wives BEFORE their own needs. Abraham was so self-centered and in violation of Ephesians 5:28 that he was more concerned with his own physical welfare than his wife's to save his own skin. He subjected her to an incredibly callous, degrading, embarrassing situation by encouraging her to lie and then be taken as another man's wife.

"Real men" can cry at the right times. Their manhood is not threatened by the need to "weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). They recognize that Jesus, a "real man," wept when the situation called for it (Luke 19:41; John 11:35). This compassionate, affectionate quality makes them "gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy" (James 3:17).

"Real men" do not sit back and wait for their wives to take the lead. They do not pout when things don't go their way. "Real men" sacrifice their own desires for others. They wait on themselves without expecting their wives to do it. They do not have to have their wives centering their lives on them. They manifest independence and stand on their own two feet. They permit, even encourage, their wives to possess a measure of independence.

"Real men" will listen to their wives and respect their counsel and advice. They know how to weigh and compare this advice with God's will. They know that they can learn from their wives and so do not stubbornly refuse to accept good advice just because it comes from their wives. They realize that a wife is given by God (Proverbs 18:22; 19:14) as an asset (Genesis 2:18) to the husband that is not too proud to listen (Proverbs 18:12-13).

"Real men" are able to hug their wives frequently and show them tender affection (not sex). They understand that God fashioned woman in such a way that she is most responsive to her husband when he treats her respectfully, courteously, sweet-

ly, gently, tenderly and affectionately (Ephesians 5:29; Colossians 3:19; I Peter 3:7).

The male "macho" image extant in our culture is the source of much sin and sorrow. It is fraught with misconceptions and destructive behaviors which mitigate against a godly marital relationship. Until we return to the Biblical image of a "real man," our marriages and homes will continue to experience turmoil, disruption and confusion. Let us study diligently and strive ardently to mold males to be in God's sight "real men."

--Via Waymarks, Bedford Texas.

The male "macho" image extant in our culture is the source of much sin and sorrow. It is fraught with misconceptions and destructive behaviors which mitigate against a godly marital relationship.

Abortion -- A Different Slant



Raymond Elliott

Recently, I read an article in the News-week magazine on the subject of Abortion. The author was an American lady living in the country of India with her husband and two children. Her perspective of abortion was influenced by her Catholic background. She is a anti-abortionist. However, she wrote the article based on the practice of abortion in India which has been very popular in that country for a long time. Yes, there are women in India who are for and against it. The dilemma is that the women who are for abortion are also against some abortions. While these women advocate a women's freedom of choice in this matter, they are against at least one reason for so many abortions in their country. You see, the majority of abortions in India is based on the sex of the unborn child. If there are 1,000 abortions in one day, 999 are females. It is practically a shame to have a girl in India. There is so much expense involved when parents marry off a daughter. An expensive dowry has to be paid to the groom's family. On the other hand, a newborn son is to be cherished and there is much rejoicing that the

family name can be carried on for another generation.

The advocates of abortion on demand in this country assert that it is the woman's right and freedom to do with her unborn child as she pleases. Period. It may be that it just happens to be unlucky in number -- one too many or for whatever cause, the mother-to-be decides to destroy the child in her womb. Even some doctors are killing unborn children upon demand because of their sex, as in India. If abortionists declare that unborn children can be killed based upon selectivity, that is, the child is physically or mentally defective or unwanted, it is the right of a woman to destroy the life of an unborn son or daughter at her discretion. Otherwise, you would be denying the freedom to abort children to some women and that would not be fair play. A woman would have as much right to kill an unborn baby girl as the woman who would destroy the life of an unborn child simply because that child would adversely affect a life-style.

Now suppose that the eastern religions keep influencing this country for another fifty years to the point that it becomes shameful for a woman to have a daughter. If the demand for an abortion based upon sex should become similar to the present practice in India, I wonder how many women would still be for abortion on demand.

I have a humorous saying that if your parents didn't have children, most likely you won't either. Sadly, I must state, if prospective mothers believe in abortion, there may not be many girls around in the future to think about having children.

--104 Rosewood Drive, Prattville, AL 36067.

Flee Fornication (Part 1)

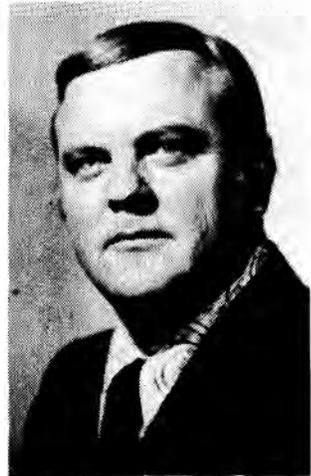
Continued From Page 1

occurs in the King James Version, it is translated by the word "fornication." It is a noun form of the verb *porneuo* which means literally to commit fornication. Thayer in his Greek English Lexicon says that it is used of illicit sexual intercourse in general, and Gerhard Kittel in his *Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words* says that the word was also used of homosexuality. Now, given that information, we emphasize the fact that this

word fornication is a broad term that includes all kinds of sexual immorality, including the sin of homosexuality, as opposed to another Greek word which is often translated adultery, and which normally refers to illicit sexual activity with another man's wife. But the word fornication is from a word that carries with it the idea of all kinds of sexual immorality, all kinds of illicit sexual activity. (To be continued).

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The Question Of Silence



R. W. Gray

When we take the task of restoration seriously we must recognize an approach to scripture that is exegetically sound; one that accords with the interpretations, usage, etc., of inspired spokesmen and penmen. It is safe to assume the Holy Spirit used the

correct approach when viewing things written aforetime (Romans 15:4).

The pledge to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent when it is silent has not been well received by some who are now a part of the body of Christ. The time honored motto has been branded by some as "nothing but a man-made rule." If such allegations are true we should abandon the plea in deference to truth, as well as to find a more satisfactory platform for unity.

Before we cast aside the aims of those who have gone before we would be well advised to carefully consider the validity, or lack of it, of their efforts. Aspersions cast upon the plea by those who perceive that it's implications hinder the advancement of their own human ideas do not justify our relegating it to the junk-heap.

Is there a definitive difference in the pledge to speak where the scriptures speak, and to remain silent when they are silent, and the following proposition? "A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, is forbidden."* The necessity for a divine warrant admits of the need to speak where God has spoken. Recognition that what is not commanded, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence drawn from such, is forbidden, admits of the need to remain silent in those areas wherein God has not spoken. If we subscribe to one of the propositions herein mentioned reason demands we subscribe to both.

"A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, is forbidden."

Inasmuch as inspiration affirms that the scriptures are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness: . . ." we safely conclude that the foregoing propositions are correct (II Timothy 3:16, 17). Furthermore, the Book warns, "Remember ALL the commandments . . . and do them; . . . that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, . . ." (Numbers 15:39). And, "what thing whatsoever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32). Jesus said, "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you!" (Matthew 28:20). Inasmuch as "every word of God is pure," we are reproved of God as liars if we "add" thereto (Proverbs 30:5-6). It is yet the case that purely human tradition makes void the word of God. (Matthew 15:6). The verses cited do not come from "our" form of hermeneutics, but are words breathed out by God's Spirit. It may be gleaned from them, however, that we are on safe ground to speak where the Bible speaks, and to refrain from speaking where it has not spoken (I Peter 4:11).

Five representative preachers of the Independent Christian Church were asked whether they insisted upon observing the Lord's Supper upon, and only upon, the first day of the week. They were further questioned as to whether they insisted upon the use of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine as the only elements on the Lord's Table. They responded to both questions with an emphatic, "Yes!" The inquiry as to "why" they so insisted was given the response, "Obviously because nothing else is AUTHORIZED!" In this the ministers under consideration gave a scriptural response. They saw the necessity for remaining "silent" where the Bible had not spoken. In this they are to be commended. Such a response demonstrates a greater degree of respect for divine revelation than is shown by some of their fellowship who now insist that "no such authority" is required.

But, we may inquire, is the Bible absolutely silent regarding the elements on the Lord's Table and the frequency of their observance? No, not at all. God has spoken. The time, as well as the elements, are specified. If the Bible had said nothing regarding elements to be used, and had the Bible left the matter of the frequency of observance to man's discretion, the matter of remaining "silent," as do the Christian Church preachers, would be invalid.

God has left the HOUR (?) of worship on the Lord's Day unspecified. We must not "bind" that it be done in the morning, at noon, or at an afternoon hour. Such would violate the law of "silence" as suggested in the verses considered in this article.

In response to the objection to instruments of music in the public worship of the church men of the same fellowship herein mentioned offer scathing rebukes, complaining that such objection violates the rule of "silence." Mock and ridicule are heaped upon those they perceive as ignorant, unlearned, and creed-binding brethren. "Since the Bible is silent about the instrument," they suggest, "you must be 'silent' regarding your objections to it."

But is the Bible "silent" on this important subject? No, not at all. Just as with the Lord's

Supper so it is with other avenues of praise and worship. God has specified singing as the kind of music to be employed in public worship. The Bible is even more "specific" regarding this than regards the elements to be placed on the Lord's Table. God did not say, "make music," but specified the KIND of music he wanted. His instructions were not generic but specific. The law of exclusion precludes the permissible use of a mechanical device in offering music before God in worship as certainly as the law of exclusion precludes the use of cake and ice cream as elements on the Lord's Table (Ephesians 5:18, 19; Colossians 3:16, 17).

It would be unfair, unkind, unChristian, and uncouth to brand as ignorant those of the Christian Churches that permit only unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper. It would be an absurd charge to suggest they were violating the law of "silence" in their rejection of cake and ice cream in the worship. How desperately these good folk need to apply the law of "silence" consistently. Simple consistency in this matter would go far in erasing the barriers that divide us in Christ.

Many Christian Churches allow two elements only on the Lord's Table because "nothing else is authorized." The churches of Christ allow only singing in their praise to God because "nothing else is authorized." Neither fellowship counts beads as an act of worship because they "are not authorized." God does not specifically forbid such "counting" but has disallowed it nonetheless. Such is not found in scripture, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from what is "authorized."

*J. L. Girardeau (Presbyterian) in *Instrumental Music in Public Worship of the Church*.

Thoughts To Consider

1. The test of faith is obedience to God. No one need claim to love God without doing his commandments.
 2. Baptism is a command of God, and no one can claim to love God and at the same time neglect baptism or refuse to be baptized.
 3. Satan used the same threefold temptations on Christ that he used on Eve in the Garden of Eden.
 4. The greatest battles of the world are fought on the silent battle field of the heart; the greatest victories are won by conquering Satan, self and sin.
 5. The devil craftily chooses moments to tempt us. We may be sure that he will attack us at the weakest point. Let us always be on our guard.
- from the pen of E. A. Elam



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Words Of Truth

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Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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Flee Fornication (Part II)



Bobby Duncan

I am afraid that we don't understand how bad fornication really is. How bad is the sin of fornication? In Deuteronomy 22, the Bible tells us that under the law of Moses, whenever fornication was committed involving a married person, that the sin was punishable by death. It was a capital offense.

That is how serious

the sin was under the law of Moses. Young people, take note. Whenever two people, who were not married, became guilty of sin, they were required to be married with no possibility of ever being divorced. God wants us to know that sexual activity is reserved for people who are married. Now under the law of Moses, it was possible under practically any circumstance for anyone to obtain a divorce. People who committed fornication before marriage, and therefore required by the law to marry, were not permitted to obtain a divorce according to Deuteronomy 22:28-29. How bad is the sin of fornication? Well, it is the only sin that God recognizes as grounds for divorce and remarriage. Think about that. In Matthew 19:9, our Lord said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery. . ." It is the only sin that one can commit that gives his spouse the right to divorce him and marry someone else without being guilty of sin in so doing. There is a sense in which it must be worse than other sins. But I will tell you something else about it. In our text, in I Corinthians 6:18 which says, "Flee fornication" you have this statement: "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." I'm not

sure that I know what that means, but I do believe that it is clear enough for all of us to understand that the apostle here says that there is some sense in which the sin of fornication is against the body that does not characterize any other sin that man might commit. So there are two senses in which the sin of fornication is in a class by itself. It is in a class by itself in that it is the only sin which can be used as grounds for divorce and remarriage. And it seems to be said by the apostle that it is the only sin which is, in some special way, against the body of the individual itself. Now if you will read that entire chapter you will see that what the apostle is saying is that fornication is taking that which belongs to God, which has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and joining that to a harlot, or joining that to a whoremonger. Incidentally, whenever you begin to read in the Bible how the Bible talks about the sin of fornication, I think you will be impressed with how bad the sin of fornication is. For example, a fornicator in the New Testament, if he is a man, then the Greek word that designates him is *pornos* . Now, that word is used in the New Testament 10 times, five times it is translated "fornicator." Five times it is translated "whoremonger." The Greek word which is used to designate one who commits fornication if you are talking about a woman is similar to that word *pornos* , only it is the Greek word *porne* . This is a word which occurs 12 times in the New Testament and in the King James version it is translated 8 times by the word *harlot* and 4 times by the word *whore* . No notice that. One who is a man is called a fornicator or whoremonger. One who is a woman who commits fornication is called a harlot or a whore. That word is never translated "lover." That word is never translated "paramour." That word is never translated "mistress." We sort of dress sin up. We want to give nice sounding names to sin and to those who commit sin. But the Bible makes it very plain that those who commit fornication are fornicators or whoremongers or harlots or whores. Whenever we look at it in that

respect, it helps us to see how bad the sin of fornication really is. Of course, like other sins, the sin of fornication, if it is unrepented of, will keep one out of heaven. One passage for example is in Galatians 5 beginning in verse 19 where the apostle Paul said, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in the time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Fornicators shall not inherit the kingdom of God. That is how bad fornication is. (To be continued).

"Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

Who Calls The Shots At Your House?

Eddie Whitten

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

YOUR first thought when you read the title of this article was something on this order, wasn't it? "He is talking about authority in the home: who is in charge, the husband or the wife?" Well, that IS a good question, but the thrust of our text, Amos 3:3, does not have that connotation. Amos records the words of God in the context of the children of Israel listening to, or hearkening to God. He has exhorted them to "Hear this word that the Lord

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Who Calls The Shots At Your House?

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hath spoken . . ." (3:1). God said that of all the families of the earth, Israel was the only one He had known, therefore because they had become so rebellious and evil, He would punish them -- they had earned punishment!

THERE is a higher authority which everyone in the home should respect. God is over all aspects of life, both business and social, both religious and secular. He is the ultimate authority, and man does not have the right nor privilege to usurp God's authority. Yet there is, even in the church, an "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

EVIDENCE of a "departure from the living God" is expressed in many ways. In earlier years in this century, when gospel preachers came to town, people went to hear what he had to say. There were great crowds and intense interest. Questions were asked and answers given. Responses of magnitude and conviction were obvious. Today, the situation is different. Members of the church have to be begged and placated to be present on Sunday morning, and many refuse to come on Sunday night or Wednesday. They say, "Show me where it says we have to come on Sunday night or Wednesday!" Therein is demonstrated the "evil heart of unbelief." Those who have to be shown a "scripture" to "compel" them to attend worship have already attested by their action that they cannot walk with God, because they do not agree with Him! How sad!

--Via Waymarks, Bedford, TX 79605.



Reaching The Elderly (Part III)



David Wade

The church should be ready to meet the spiritual needs of the elderly. Milton L. Barron lists eight spiritual needs of the elderly!:

1. Assurance of God's continuing love;
2. The certainty that life is protected;
3. Relief from heightened emotions (especially guilt, grief, fear);
4. Relief from the pangs of loneliness;
5. A perspective for life that embraces time and eternity;
6. A continuing spiritual growth through new experience;
7. A satisfying status in life as a person;
8. A feeling of continuing usefulness.

The spiritual needs should be viewed, to some degree, as continuing needs both before and after conversion.

Preaching to the aged calls for an understanding of their needs. In preaching the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), the faithful minister will acquaint himself with the needs of the elderly and how the Word of God meets their needs. John Gardner urges: "Those who preach to audiences made up of some aged persons need to consider the potential of the pulpit in helping those older members meet their problems and their special spiritual needs. Special lessons, series of lessons, or appropriate points of application in sermons are just a few of the ways of preaching to the needs of the aged. The thoughtful preacher will bring the healing, helping Word of God to bear on the special needs of the elderly in his sermons."²

Gardner describes the preacher's three great ministries to the aged as 1) Ministry of the Word, 2) Ministry of Visitation, and 3) Ministry of Counseling.³

In his book entitled, *How to Preach to People's Needs*, Edgar N. Jackson has a brief chapter entitled, "Preaching to the Aged." In his comments

The church should be aware of special needs for some of the elderly. These may include covered access near auditorium, Bible classes near auditorium, hearing devices, handrails, and wheelchair ramps. The visitation team and benevolent committee should stand ready to assist the elderly when needed.

he suggests three topical lessons; 1) "The Well Nourished Faith," (Psalm 37:25); 2) "The Springs of Spiritual Life," (Genesis 35:1); and 3) "Your Days are Numbered," (Deuteronomy 33:25).

We must confess that in many ways we have neglected our responsibility to reach the elderly with the gospel. In this series we have discussed Biblical and practical ways to meet the challenge. Let us arise immediately and begin to salvage those who are in the sunset of life for the cause of Christ.

¹Milton L. Barron, "The Role of Religion and Religious Institutions in Creating the Milieu of Older People," in *Organized Religion and the Older Person*, ed. Delton L. Schudder.

²John Gardner, "Ministering Efforts Toward the Aged by Certain Preachers in Five Mid-South States," A guided research paper, Harding Graduate School of Religion, November 1975, pp. 25-26.

³Ibid, pp. 25-28.

⁴Edgar N. Jackson, *How to Preach to People's Needs* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956) pp. 150-158).

Death Leaves Her Waiting At The Altar



Bobby Key

The above headlines appeared in several newspapers across the country. The article reads in part: "A young bridegroom and his best man brother were killed in a car crash Saturday while they were rushing to the wedding three miles away. Donald Henry Stoffel, 23 was killed less than a half hour before he was to be married to Nancy Koepker."

This young man was on his way to the church building to be married and he was killed just thirty minutes before the wedding. Now, please permit me to ask some questions: (1) Did he die as a single or married man? (2) Was his intention to marry in just half an hour the same as being married? (3) Will the court allow Miss Koepker to

Continued On Page 3

The Best Way Is God's Way



Cecil May, Jr.

Some speak of the commandments of the Bible, the laws of God, as if they were arbitrary or capricious. They are perceived as hindrances to man's freedom and happiness. In reality, the opposite is true.

God's original intent regarding man, woman, marriage and sex is set forth in the words, "For this cause shall a man leave his

mother and father, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Jesus said those were God's words and that in marriage it is God himself who makes the two one (Matthew 19:6). The Bible also shows that the expression "one flesh" involves sexual union (I Corinthians 6:16). God forbids fornication, adultery (Galatians 5:19-20), and turning from one wife or husband to another as putting asunder what God has joined together (Matthew 19:6-9).

God's purpose is not to limit his creatures' happiness, but to help them find fulfillment. God made mankind to find its highest happiness, not in promiscuity like animals, but in a loving permanent relationship built on trust and commitment.

God made mankind to find its highest happiness, not in promiscuity like animals, but in a loving permanent relationship built on trust and commitment.

Interestingly, some modern songs acknowledge the validity of God's way. In "A Modern-day Romance," sung by The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, a pick-up driving cowboy is picked up by a beautiful woman for a one-night (or, maybe, week-end) stand. The intent is to have fun, with no strings attached, but when the trysting is over and the girl has left, the cowboy reflects on the unhappiness of it all. The refrain goes,

"It's a modern-day romance, a new kind of game;
No time to slow dance -- in the fast lane!
I tried to love her without any strings,

But a modern-day romance has left me with old-fashioned pain."

One of the real travesties of modern slang is the

use of the expression, "going all the way," to describe illicit sexual union. What is experienced in an atmosphere of guilt, fear of discovery, and anxiety about unwed pregnancy or social disease is not only not all the way, it is not even one-tenth of the way to the bliss of union intended by God between a man and a woman who know they

belong to each other alone, and who blend their hearts and their mutual trust as well as their bodies in their relationship.

God wants what is best for us. That is why he gave his law.

--Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, Mississippi.

The Multifarious Work Of The Lord



Bobby Key

does so by the authority of God. To neglect this responsibility is to disobey the Word of God (Titus 2:5). The godly woman who sweeps, mops, irons, cooks and changes diapers is certainly not neglecting the Lord's Work.

Somewhere along the line we have gotten the idea that we must either be in worship service, knocking doors, riding a bus or teaching a cottage meeting to be working for the Lord. Now, all of these things are important and they need to be done; however, working for the Lord is not limited to these few good works. Making a living, caring for a house, feeding and clothing a family, training children by example and precept, visiting the sick, befriending the stranger, helping a neighbor, yes, and even recreation may be doing the Lord's Work! A lady whose husband was bed-ridden and demanded round the clock care came to me in tears because she was unable to get out and knock doors and work for the Lord like some of the others were doing. A preacher had told her that she was going to hell if she didn't get out and set up some cottage meetings. My friend, the Lord expects you to do what you can with what you have, and he never expects the impossible. It is never right to place a blanket indictment on an entire group of people who differ in ability, circumstances, and priorities.

We see so many times the inter-relationship of physical and spiritual activities. It is almost impossible to separate the two. Since making a living is a part of God's law, the Christian who fails to work has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (I Timothy 5:8). The Lord wants everything we do in word or deed to be done in the name of the Lord. Too many in the church have their own special interest and expect everybody else to have the

A young Christian woman with six children, two yet in diapers, walked into my office and told me she wanted to be assigned some work to do -- she wanted to work for the Lord. Bless her heart, I told her she had her hands full working for the Lord right at home caring for her precious children. One who keeps a house

same interest or else he is not working for the Lord. Ours is an age of specialization. In life one develops special interests, talents, and undergoes special training for special jobs. It is only natural that the most important work of the church, is the part I am interested in. And, if others are not involved in what I am doing then, "they must not be doing anything for the Lord."

We have special interest groups in the federal government, local government, the school system, and yes, even in the church of Christ. The body of Christ has many members and all members do not have the same office. Yet all are important, and it takes all the parts to make the whole body. We have brethren involved in child-care, educational programs, door knocking, campaign work, care for the elderly, bus programs, TV, radio, newspaper, religious periodicals, camps and youth activities, and a dozen other things that are good. Let none of these special interest groups sit back and judge their brethren who are working for the Lord in another field and accuse them of not doing anything. Let us be glad that everybody in the church doesn't have the same ability so that all the parts (members) might work together for the good of the whole and the glory of God.

There is no place in the church for nit-picking and criticism of sincere brethren who don't see fit to jump on every band-wagon that rolls by. Let us pray that God will use us in the place that we can serve him best. Take what ability you have and get started working for the Lord where you live and you will not have time to be critical of brethren with other talents and interest. May we all work together and with the Lord to the saving of the lost, the edification of the saints, and the glory of God.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

There is no place in the church for nit-picking and criticism of sincere brethren who don't see fit to jump on every band-wagon that rolls by.

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What Is A Home?



W. A. Holley

The word HOME is used many times in Sacred Writ. Sometimes the home, is used, by metonymy, for the house or family. The home, in a real sense, is far more than a house. To build a home as God would have it, we must build wisely. Much careful planning and hard, diligent work is involved. No Christian home can be the

product of an accident!

In the light of the foregoing words, we suggest that Matthew 7:21-27 be carefully considered. A young man whose father was in the military, said, "We have a home; we just don't have a house to put it in."

We shall now offer some guidelines for the establishment of a happy, Christian home:

(1) From the beginning of the human race, the home was monogamic in the form. Adam and Eve

Death Leaves Her Waiting At The Altar

Continued From Page 2

wear his name or inherit any estate he may have had?

Any thinking person knows the answers to these questions. But, what about the man not married to Christ? If a man dies without becoming a Christian will he have an inheritance in the Father's estate? If one has every intention of being married to Christ, the bridegroom, but death comes before the marriage is completed, will he be able to wear the name of Christ and receive the inheritance of eternal life?

My friend, baptism is the last act of being married to Christ. The marriage ceremony that makes us one with Christ is not complete without baptism. If one dies before baptism he has no promise for he is not a joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:14-17). When one obeys the gospel of Christ he is married to "him that is raised from the dead" (Romans 7:4). Faith in Christ is not enough. Every person who gladly receives God's Word is baptized into Christ thereby putting on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Are you married to Christ? Please, don't let death leave you waiting at the altar. "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

*Are you married to Christ?
Please, don't let death leave
you waiting at the altar.*

were to live with each other until death separated them. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:23-24).

Although divorce was permitted (Deuteronomy 24:1-3), it was never the law of God. When Jesus came, he restored God's original law of marriage (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12). This law is equally binding upon all men and women. Marriage partners should understand that marriage is an opportunity for happiness. It is a step in which two imperfect individuals unite their hearts in the struggle for happiness.

(2) The home is procreative in design. How did the Lord God put it? We quote: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:27-28). Thus, sexual relations between human beings are not merely for the gratification of the flesh. Such false notions have led to abortion, homosexuality, lesbianism, and other deviations from God's law (Romans 1:26-28). God has set the bounds for sexual activity for all men and women. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage should be respected and honored. All sexual impurity is a sin before God. Parents, lend your children to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:27-28; cf. Psalm 127:3-5).

(3) The home is united in construction. We read: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:5-6). Paul is the author of a wonderful statement describing this holy relationship: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Ephesians 5:21-23). Another passage of great importance: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). The only scriptural ground for divorce and remarriage is adultery (Matthew 19:9). A house divided cannot stand (Matthew 12:25-30).

(4) A Christian home demands mutual obligations. Both husband and wife are obligated to work to make their marriage succeed. The husband has his duties and the wife has hers. Learn to cooperate in all areas of your marriage. Always be ready to talk when problems arise. Never go to bed angry. Settle all differences immediately. Learn to forgive and forget. Realize that you cannot always have your way. Try to maintain a warm, friendly attitude toward each other. Do not use the children as pawns. Marriage is somewhat like a lock and key: both must work together if success is to be achieved.

(5) A Christian home is patriarchal in government. The head of the home is the husband. Such

leadership does not imply dictatorship. Arbitrary action and genuine love cancel out each other. A Christian wife can submit to her Christian husband without any loss of dignity whatsoever. In the light of these statements, we suggest that Ephesians 5:22-32 be read and digested. No institution can have two heads. Two presidents of the United States at the same time would be a disaster!!

(6) A Christian home is religious in spirit. Our nation and the church suffers today because of a lack of religious training. Think of drug addiction, all kinds of crimes, filthiness and indecency, drunkenness and the like, all indicating a lack of spiritual training. All such training should begin in the home (Genesis 18:19; Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 6:7-10; Ephesians 6:1-4). Parents, do not wait until your children are grown to begin training them -- it is then too late! It is here that children and grandchildren are taught to love, respect, reverence truth and righteousness. Here, they learn to live in peace and harmony with the laws of God and with one another (Matthew 22:34-40).

In the home we build some of our most cherished memories. Most young people desire to leave home. But, when one becomes old, he longs to return to the old home place, there to visit again with old friends, and to see once more the hallowed scenes of childhood. But there is another land to which we are going, where the redeemed of the ages dwell.

"Mid pleasures and places though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

Make Me A Better Teacher

I dreamed the pearly gates were opened wide
And I had entered in, for I had died;
And now must give account of all my acts
I saw a book there opened with these facts.

I thought, "My role upon this earth was small
Just teaching in a Bible school, my call."
For I saw all the saints of God up there,
And mine was, at most, a meager share.

I heard the Master call for my report;
I stood afraid, for mine, -- was short.
I trembled and felt I would not pass,
Then whispered, "I just taught a Bible class."

And from the throne I heard His voice, "Well done,
Come in and share eternal life.
Although your place was humble and obscure,
You led the thirsty to the Waters Pure."

And then it seemed that from eternal plains,
There came the sound of voices in refrain
That rolled across the mighty sea of glass,
"There are the great - the teachers of a class."

When I awoke I thought of those I'd taught,
And in their lives, what glory God had wrought.
I prayed to God and all that I could say,
"Make me a better teacher, day by day."

--Author Unknown



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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Words of Truti

Acts 26:25

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Flee Fornication (Part III)



Bobby Duncan

relationships, the wrong kind of wardrobe, going to the wrong places, and neglecting those things which God has said will prevent fornication.

I want to mention five things that cause people to commit fornication: the wrong kind of thinking, the wrong kind of relationships, the wrong kind of wardrobe, going to the wrong places, and neglecting those things which God has said will prevent fornication.

Let's go back and look at them. The wrong kind of thinking. That is what causes people to commit fornication. They don't control their thinking. In Matthew 15:19 Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Where do these things come from? The Lord said they come out of the heart. Now, of course, the

wise man said in Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart so is he." If a man is a fornicator, it is because that's what he thinks about. People don't commit fornication without thinking about it. It doesn't just happen. In James 1:13 James said, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Don't blame God, and don't say it just happened. Those who commit fornication do so because it was in their hearts. Now, I wonder how many hearts have been prepared to commit fornication by watching the "soaps." I wonder. "As he thinketh in his heart so is he."

What causes fornication? The wrong kind of relationships. I'm not necessarily talking about associating with evil people. I know that the Bible teaches the danger of that in I Corinthians 15:33 where the Bible says, "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good morals." We need to be careful of the people with whom we associate and we need to associate with the very best people possible. Yet, the kind of relationships I am talking about that are the wrong kind of relationships that sometimes lead to fornication are relationships with good people, friendly relationships that become more than friendly. Up in North Alabama a few months ago, a young lady who was having problems with her marriage came to a faithful gospel preacher. She was a faithful Christian so far as I know. And then they committed fornication. Neither one of them intended for that to happen. I am just confident that that was the farthest thing from either of their minds, and yet, they allowed themselves to get into a friendship, and they failed to guard that friendship and to keep it holy and keep it pure. From time to time, we hear about gospel preachers who commit fornication with their secretaries. They didn't

intend to do it. They allowed themselves to become too friendly with each other. They failed to guard their relationship. So I suggest to you that we need to be careful of the wrong kind of relationships. We need to guard our relationships even with godly people.

What causes fornication? The wrong kind of thinking, the wrong kind of relationships, and thirdly, the wrong kind of wardrobes. In Matthew 5:28 Jesus said, "I say unto you [this is Jesus talking]. That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." I realize there are some people who say, "Well, evil men are going to lust regardless of what women wear." And there are some who will say that if one's heart is pure he is not going to lust regardless of what women wear. But I remind you it was Jesus who talked about the danger of the lustful look. It was Jesus who said, "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." David, a man after God's own heart, over in II Samuel 11, went walking. The Bible tells us that he saw a woman bathing herself. Now don't misunderstand me. I am not suggesting to you that David's sin with Bathsheba was designed by Bathsheba. I am not saying that it was by design that she went out and took a bath in full view of the palace of the king so that the king would come and look at her and lust after her. And yes, I agree that whenever David saw her he should have looked the other way. Certainly, that is true. But the point is, if she had been more careful about where she took her baths, there is a good possibility that all of the difficulties and all of the troubles that came about as a result of David and Bathsheba's sin might have been avoided. It is significant that in I Timothy 2:9, 10, the apostle Paul said, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or

Continued On Page 3

Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25



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David Wade . . . Editor
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What Is The Problem?

Jimmie Doss

[Editor's note: Sister Doss is a member of the Alder Springs Church of Christ. She is married and has two daughters, ages 11 and 13].

What is the problem with our society? Why do people continually blame the children of our society for our drug and alcohol problem? I am so tired of hearing people blame our young children for what is going on. If the parents would take a closer look at their own lives we might find an answer to some of the problems.

How can we possibly expect our children to grow up and not do things when they see it everyday in their own homes? How can anyone tell their children not to smoke while they sit there with a cigarette in their hand. It doesn't work!

How can we possibly expect our children to grow up and not do things when they see it everyday in their own homes?

When our children see Daddy come home from work and grab a beer before eating and then continue drinking until he passes out, what do we expect our young people to get from that? They look to us for guidance and I think we need to do a better job, if we want them to be better. How many people think it is alright to have a drink after work, social drinking or taking some medication for nerves all the time? Our children see this and think it's OK. And why not, if it's OK for Mom and Dad to do it.

I think it's time the parents put some blame on themselves and start doing something to change the situation. We need to talk to our children more. Listen to them when they talk to us. We need to help them and not hurt them.

2400 Luther Street, Guntersville, AL 35976.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Petition RM-2493



David Wade
ton, D.C. on the subject (F.C.C. The Petition RM-2493) which would ultimately pave the way to stop the reading of the gospel on the airwaves of America. She took her petition with 27,000 signatures to back her."

The petition urges concerned Christians to photocopy this letter and "send it to ten people (friends, relatives, church members, etc.) who will share our concern." The individual receiving it is also urged to sign the bottom part, clip and mail to the F.C.C. in order to register your protest.

Perhaps whoever penned this petition meant well. However, the petition is loaded with falsehood, is not a current matter, and has cost the public well over five million dollars in useless protest and wasted energy and effort.

Several copies of the petition surfaced around Jasper, Alabama the last few weeks. We called the F.C.C. in Washington, D.C. and they sent us the following fact sheet on this matter. The entire reply is published so that our subscribers may have access to this information and help put an end to this matter.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554.

Fact Sheet - RM 2493

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the broadcast of religious programs. This information presents basic facts on a subject that in recent years has aroused widespread interest and has resulted in a great number of letters and telephone calls to the Commission.

In December, 1974, a petition from Jeremy D. Lansman and Lorenzo W. Milam asked the FCC to inquire, among other subjects, into the operating practices of noncommercial educational broadcasting stations, including those licensed to religious educational organizations. The petitioners also asked that no licenses be granted for any new noncommercial educational stations until the

requested inquiry had been completed. The "Lansman - Milam petition" (which was routinely assigned the number RM-2493) was DENIED by the FCC on August 1, 1975 -- over 12 years ago! The Commission explained then that it is required by the 1st Amendment "to observe a stance of neutrality toward religion, acting neither to promote nor to inhibit religion." It also explained that it must treat religious and secular organizations alike in determining their eligibility for broadcasting channels.

Early in 1975, the FCC began to receive mail which indicated that in many parts of the country there were rumors claiming the petitioners of RM-2493 had called for an end to religious broadcasting and that the Commission was going to prohibit religious programs on radio and television. Such rumors are false. Additional mail and telephone calls came in from people who thought that Mrs. Madalyn Murray O'Hair, a well-known atheist, was a sponsor of RM-2493, or had separately proposed that the FCC consider limiting or banning religious programming, and that she had been granted a federal hearing to discuss this matter. Those rumors are also false.

No federal law or regulation gives the FCC the authority to prohibit radio and television stations from presenting religious programs. The Communications Act (the law that established the FCC and defines its authority) prohibits the Commission from censoring broadcast material and from interfering with freedom of speech in broadcasting. The Commission cannot direct any broadcaster to present, or refrain from presenting, announcements or programs on religion, and it cannot act as a judge of the wisdom or accuracy of such material. Broadcasters -- not the FCC or any other government agency -- are responsible for selecting the programming that is aired by their stations.

We hope that preceding paragraphs will help to correct any and all misinformation about FCC policies on religious broadcasting. Over the past 12 years this agency has received over 21 million pieces of mail on this subject. Every effort has been made to advise the public of the action taken on RM-2493. The laws and the Commission's policies on broadcast of religious programming have been publicized in newspapers and magazines (including TV Guide and Time), in religious publications, and in meetings of religious groups. **Because these false rumors still persist, any assistance you can provide by telling your friends and neighbors what the facts are will be greatly appreciated. -- 7-88.**

Flee Fornication (Part III)

Continued From Page 1

pearls, or costly array . . ." We sometimes don't read the next verse: "But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Whenever you get dressed in the morning, stand in front of a full-length mirror and ask yourself the question, "Does this become a woman professing godliness?" And I think we need to say the same thing about men too. It is not just women who don't dress as Christian people ought to dress. We need to be careful about our wardrobes. If we would wear the right kind of clothes, both men and women, I think we would avoid some of the fornication that goes on. Christians should be very, very careful not to wear provocative clothing.

What causes fornication? The wrong kind of thinking, the wrong kind of relationships, the wrong kind of wardrobe, and being in the wrong places. There are some places that Christian people ought not to go. Being in the wrong places is suggested by a statement in II Samuel 11:1 in connection with the sin of David and Bathsheba. I don't know whether the statement that is made there really implies that David was in the wrong place or not, but I want you to look at it.

"And it came to pass after the year had expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab. . ." the implication seems to be that David should have been off doing battle instead of sending Joab. If he had been off in the battle field where perhaps he should have been, he wouldn't have gotten into the trouble that he got into. I am not sure that's what that says, and I'm not sure that's what that means. But I am sure of this: Christian people ought to be careful where they go. We teach our little children the little song, "Watch your hands, watch your hands, what they do. Watch your eyes what they see, your ears what they hear. Watch your feet where they go." A man came to talk to me one time because he was having problems with his, I've forgotten whether it was the 3rd or 4th wife. But we talked for a little while, and he finally said, "You know I've had hard luck with all of my wives." And then he made this observation: "I guess I get my wives at the wrong place." You know, like talking about buying your gasoline at the wrong place. "I guess I get my wives at the wrong place." Well, that aroused my curiosity and I said, "Well, where do you get them?" He said, "I've gotten everyone of them at a night club." Well, what do you expect? If you build your house in a volcano, you are going to expect it to erupt sooner or later. We need to be careful where we go. Stay away from the bars and the night clubs. Stay away from the places where the temptation is certain to be to commit fornication.

What causes fornication? Number five, neglecting God's preventives. You know God has told us, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). And then he added, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." It is significant that in our text in I Corinthians 6:18, the writer says, "Flee fornication." He doesn't say stand up and fight it. He says flee from it. You might not be strong

enough to fight it and win the battle. Flee fornication. Why? Because the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation and then when that temptation comes along, run. That's what Joseph did. Whenever Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph to commit fornication, he fled. He ran. He had to leave his coat behind, but he didn't leave his morality behind. He didn't leave his God behind. He didn't leave his principles behind. Flee fornication. God says that is one way to avoid committing the sin. But another thing, in I Corinthians 7:2, the apostle Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit said, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." That's the way to overcome fornication. Let every man have his own wife and every woman have her own husband, not somebody else's. On the front of a bulletin which came from Pulaski, Tennessee was the picture of a young man standing in front of an old gentleman sitting in a rocking chair. The young man said to the old gentleman, "Grandpa, your generation didn't have all of these social diseases like we have today. What did you wear for safe sex?" Grandpa said, "A wedding ring." That's what God said about it. To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife. Let every woman have her own husband. That's God preventive. Now, down in verse 5 of that very same chapter, the apostle said, "Defraud ye not one the other,

except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." That says husbands and wives need to avoid fornication by being the kind of husbands and wives that will help avoid fornication. That's God's preventive for fornication.

Another preventive is mentioned in Psalm 119:11 where the psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." One reason so many people commit fornication is because they don't know what the Bible teaches. You know, we are living in times when people grow up and get married and divorce and remarry and find themselves living in an adulterous relationship, and they find themselves living in that kind of relationship before they ever know what the Bible teaches about it. We need to teach our children God's will about marriage. We need to let them know just as soon as they are able to understand, that whenever they get married, they are supposed to stay married just as long as they live. Even though fornication is so very prevalent, even among members of the Lord's church, that is not God's plan. And it will still wreck and ruin the lives of those who are guilty of that sin. (To be continued).

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Labels



Cecil May, Jr.

was the preacher in Vicksburg, Mississippi, some Texas folks crossed the river on Saturday night, found our number by the only listing for Church of Christ in the phone book, and called from their motel to see if they wanted to worship with us the next morning. "Are you a liberal or conservative?" they asked.

I had recently returned from the West Coast. I had dealt there with brethren who were not certain of the necessity of baptism, and who thought issues like the kind of music used in worship, or when one partook of the Lord's Supper were quaint relics of the past, matters of utter indifference. My mind was still nestled completely in that context, and I unhesitatingly replied, "We're conservative!"

It seems I hear more and more people using labels, applying them both to others and to themselves. I find myself increasingly uncomfortable with labels.

"I'm a conservative" has a nice solid ring to it in these vacillating, drifting days, and I certainly do not want to be known as "a liberal." But I remember when I

They came. When they saw one of the rooms we were using for classrooms was also set up to be used for fellowship meals they were certain I had deliberately lied to them to seduce them into our liberal church. To them, a conservative was someone who did not eat in the church building.

I believe the Bible completely and without reservation. To some that labels me "fundamentalist." The news media, however, uses "fundamentalist" as a label for Jim Jones, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Appalachian Mountain snakehandlers, and folks who want to ban The Wizard of Oz from public school libraries. I don't fit very comfortably with any of these folks; so there is another label I prefer to avoid.

In Antioch, in the first century, some folks were labeled "Christians" (Acts 11:26). I believe I will settle for that one.

--Via Vicksburg Reminder

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We Need More "Servants"



Edsel Burselson

Uppermost in the mind of the Christian should be the desire to be like the Master. Peter declared that "... Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). Jesus said, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be

ministered unto, but to minister . . ." (Matthew 20:28). Luke tells us that Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Too many fall far short of having the mind of Christ who "... made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant . . ." (Philippians 2:5-7). A servant is one who enjoys doing good for others. Bob Bradshaw wrote: "A servant is one who is willing to:

serve - without having to be served
love - without having to be loved
please - without having to be pleased
help - without having to be helped
give - without having to be given."

Once a discouraged young doctor in a large city was visited by his father who came from a rural district. "Well, son," he said, "How are you getting along?" "I'm not getting along at all," was the answer. The old man's countenance fell, but he spoke courage and patience and hope. Later in the day he went with his son to the free dispensary. He sat in silence while twenty-five poor unfortunates received help. When the door closed upon the last one, the old man burst out, "I thought you told me you were doing nothing. Why, if I helped out twenty-five people in a month, I would thank God that my life counted for something." "There isn't any money in it, though," explained the son. "Money," the old man shouted. "What is money in comparison with being useful to your fellowman?"

Someone has said, "The service we render to others is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth. It is obvious that man is himself a traveller; that the purpose of this world is not 'to have and to hold' but 'to give and to serve.' There can be no other meaning."

Someone has said, The service we render to others is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth.

Annie Johnson Flint wrote:
Christ has no hands but our hands
To do his work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men on his way;
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how he died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to his side.

Paul said we should "... by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). An anonymous poet expressed it in these lines:

They are the servants of the Lord
Who try to do His will,
And look to Him for courage while
They struggle up the hill,
Who love their neighbors as themselves
And minister their needs
With friendliness and sympathy,
And with their kindly deeds.
Their song is one of happiness
In sunshine and in rain,
And even though their plans go wrong,
They never once complain.
They are the servants of the Lord

Who dedicate their day
To living better lives on earth
According to His way.
They are the true, unselfish souls
Who ask for no reward,
Except to be eternally
The servants of the Lord.

What a difference there would be in the church if we could catch the spirit of serving. The grumpy, the pouters, the complainers would realize a complete change in their attitude toward the church as the joy of Christianity would become a reality.

--Via West End Bulletin, Birmingham, AL.

Tell Them Before It's Too Late



Don Williams

In the Gettysburg, Pennsylvania Battle-ground Museum, I read a very interesting sideline story that took place during that battle in July of 1863. Wesley Culp, who fought for the Union forces at Winchester, met a friend of his at the battle by the name of Jack Skelley. Skelley gave Culp a note to give to a girl back in Gettysburg. Her name was Jenny Wade. At the end of the day of battle at Gettysburg, Culp visited with her sister who lived nearby. She said that she could deliver the note to Jenny, but Wesley declined, saying he would prefer to deliver it himself.

The note was never delivered. Wesley Culp was killed on July 3rd as he and his side attacked Culp's Hill, his old boyhood playground. On that same day, Jenny Wade was accidentally struck by a stray bullet and died also. Nine days later, Jack Skelley died of wounds received in the battle.

The undelivered note. What were its contents? Was it a love note from one lonely soldier to his beloved? Was it a message asking forgiveness for some wrong that had been done? Maybe a note giving Jenny word of news back home, perhaps how her family and friends were doing? We will never know, but whatever it was, the message was not received. Time ran out on all of them.

What message do you need to give to someone? Is there an uncorrected problem between you and another? If so, go to them today and get it settled before it is too late. Paul was not just giving friendly advice when he wrote, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath:" (Ephesians 4:26). He was speaking from the word of God.

Do you need to tell someone of the message about Christ and the gospel? If so, do not wait -- tell it today! Everyday one spends OUTSIDE of Christ is a day one spends WITH SATAN! We will be held accountable by God for the message of good news we could have given to others but did not. In Ezekiel 3:17-19, God says, "Son of Man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his

wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet, if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

Do you need to give someone the message, "I Love You"? If so, do it today. So often, we wait until too late to give relatives and friends "their roses" -- the compliments of accolades they so richly deserve. We wait until they die to say how much we loved them, how much we thought of them, how much we cared for them. Learn the lesson from Wesley Culp -- Deliver The Message While You Can!

--Route 2, Box 713 Guin, Alabama 35563.

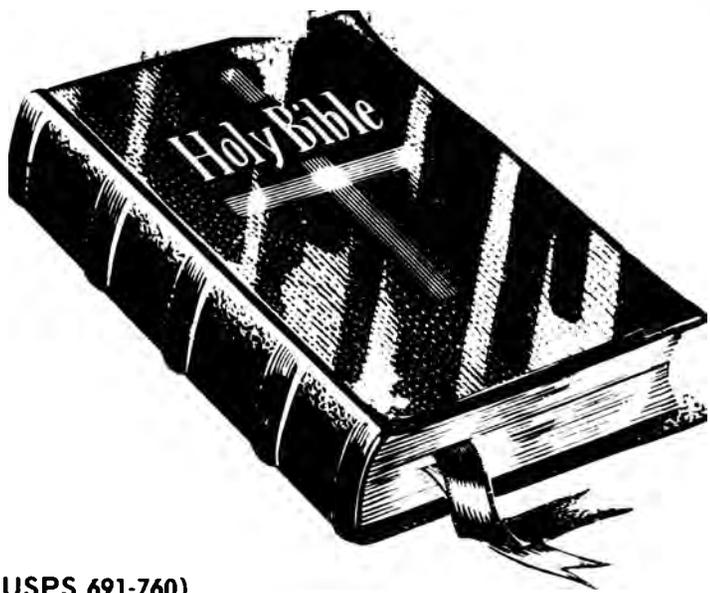
On This Day

Mend a quarrel. Search out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion, and replace it with trust. Write a love letter. Share some treasure. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in a word or deed.

Keep a promise. Find the time. Forego a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologize if you were wrong. Try to understand. Flout envy. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Appreciate, be kind, be gentle. Laugh a little more.

Deserve confidence. Take up arms against malice. Decry complacency. Express your gratitude. Worship your God. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love. Speak it again. Speak it still again. Speak it still once again.

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—Acts 26:25

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Flee Fornication (Part IV)



Bobby Duncan

What is to be done about fornication? What is to be done to obtain forgiveness? If one is guilty of the sin of fornication, then what is he supposed to do? Of course, if a person is not a Christian, in order to be forgiven of any sin he has to obey the gospel of Christ. He has to hear the gospel and believe it, repent, confess Christ, and

be baptized. But now notice, repentance means getting out of sin. It means giving up the sinning business. If a man is a thief, he has to quit thieving. If he is a bootlegger, he has to quit bootlegging. That is what repentance involves. If he is committing fornication, then he has to quit committing fornication. And that would involve that adultery that Jesus mentioned in Matthew 19:9 where it says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication and shall marry another committeth adultery." If a man is in an adulterous relationship, when he repents that means he has to get out of that relationship. He can't just keep on committing sin and get God's forgiveness. Sometimes the question is asked, "Well, doesn't baptism wash away all sins?" Yes, but one has to repent of all sins before baptism will wash away any of them, including the sin of fornication or adultery. If a person is already a child of God and has become guilty of the sin of fornication, then he has to seek God's pardon, God's mercy just like he would have to seek God's pardon and his mercy for any other sin that he might commit. He will have to repent of it, confess it, and pray to God that he might be forgiven. If it is a private sin then he needs to confess it privately. Sin that is known only to one person needs to be confessed to that one person and prayer made to God. Sins that are generally known, need to be publicly confessed, so that everybody who knows about the sin will also

know about the repentance. But whether one is a child of God or alien sinner, to receive forgiveness of the sin of fornication or any other sin, he has to repent. That means getting out of sin.

Sometimes the question is asked, "Well, doesn't baptism wash away all sins?" Yes, but one has to repent of all sins before baptism will wash away any of them, including the sin of fornication or adultery.

What should the church do about the sin of fornication in its members? The same thing that the church ought to do about any other sin on the part of its members. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." So it is the duty and responsibility of all of us to do everything that we can to try to restore all of those who are guilty of any kind of sin. Now, of course, the Bible teaches that it might become necessary in some cases for the church to withdraw its fellowship from people who are guilty of sin and who will not repent. In I Corinthians 5 the apostle Paul described the sin of fornication, and he said it was such fornication as was not so much as named among the Gentiles, that a man should have his father's wife. And he pointed out to the church that they had a duty and a responsibility to deal with this matter. He rebuked them because they wanted to be broad minded. Look how broad minded we are. Why, we allow this to go on and say nothing about it. There are some people who are proud of their broad mindedness. Paul said you need to do something about that sin. You need to deal with it. And there's a statement in II Corinthians 7:12 where Paul, I think, is still talking about this same incident. He said, "Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that had suffered wrong." I think he is saying there, I wrote to you about this

sin, but I wasn't writing to you for the benefit of the man who had committed the sin of taking his father's wife, and I wasn't writing for the benefit of the man who had been sinned against, the father whose wife had been taken away from him. "But," he said, "that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you." He was writing for the benefit of the church. Worse than the sin of fornication in the church is the sin on the part of the church in ignoring the sin of fornication and pretending that everything is all right. He said in I Corinthians 5, "Don't you know that one rotten apple in the barrel will cause the whole barrel full to rot?" Now that wasn't the words that he used. What he said was, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." No wonder members of the church commit sin, when other members of the church have committed sin and gotten by and no action has been taken on the part of the church. So those who are guilty of the sin of fornication ought to repent.

As terrible as the sin of fornication is, God will forgive all of those who repent and who will meet his terms of pardon. In Isaiah 55:6,7, the prophet said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 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." Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet [we talk about scarlet women], they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Regardless of what sin you might be guilty of, if you have not obtained God's pardon then you need to be forgiven. You need to be forgiven by complying with God's plan of salvation, God's terms of pardon. If you are not a Christian, believe the gospel, repent of all of your sins, confess that Jesus Christ is the son of God, and then be buried with him in baptism so that your sins will be forgiven. If you are a child of God and you haven't been faithful, you ought to be restored by repenting, confessing your unfaithfulness, and praying to the Lord.

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35005.

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

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A Successful Marriage

KENNETH McCLAIN

1. A Successful marriage will have love for one another and love for the Lord.
2. A successful marriage will have giving and taking and will let love cover the disagreements that come in every marriage.
3. A successful marriage will never carry into tomorrow the petty troubles of the day, but will forgive at the end of each day and never bring up the matter again.
4. A successful marriage will never discuss disagreements and personal problems with others; together they will ask the Lord for help.
5. A successful marriage will have daily Bible reading and prayer. To pray together is to stay together.
6. A successful marriage will never think of divorce as a solution to solving problems. So often, divorce never solves anything, but adds many more problems. Stay with your vows "until death do you part."
7. A successful marriage will keep the love and romance in it and will express love, appreciation and affection.
8. A successful marriage will try to live within its financial means, and will not try to keep up with the Joneses.
9. A successful marriage will have eyes on each other - not looking around for someone else.
10. A successful marriage will allow the Lord to be the guide.

Via Garfield Heights Bulletin
Indianapolis, IN 46203

**Subscribe
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The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Questions Brew Over Scripture Titles And Time



David Wade

tion chauvinism, unacceptable, etc.

Phyllis Trible, a Bible scholar (?) at New York's Union Theological Seminary contends, "When Christians say Old Testament, that implies it's out-of-date, inferior. That offends Jews." The article also states, "Early in Christian history, the church gave the designation Old Testament to the Scriptures preceding Jews, a Jew. Writings about him, also by Jews, were called the New Testament." This is an amazing "revelation" but it does not seem to square with the Bible. Paul, by inspiration, refers to the Scriptures as "old testament" and "new testament" in II Corinthians 3:6, 14. Furthermore, Paul declares that God has "made us ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Corinthians 6:6). Paul compares the old and the new as "ministration of death" and "ministration of the spirit," "condemnation" and "righteousness," "that which is done away and "that which remaineth" (II Corinthians 6:7-11).

I can understand that the inspired writings of Paul are offensive to Orthodox Judaism today. It is a fact that all of the Scriptures are offensive to some people. It is a sad day when gospel preachers feel compelled to eliminate from their vocabulary anything that offends anyone. When that happens he is no longer a gospel preacher. Let's not retreat from calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things in Bible ways. Let us "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

The time designations, B.C. - A.D., of course, are not of biblical origin. Such publications as *Biblical Archaeology Review*, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, and *Harvard Theological Review* no longer use these designations. Rather they opt for C.E. (Current Era) and B.C.E. (Before Current Era). In some circles the "C" is understood as "Common."

Although these terms remove Christ and Lord, the Lord is still implied by their usage. Why is this

era the current era? Because of Jesus! He is the central figure of all history! Our calendars, our money, in fact every transaction that is dated recognizes the fact that Jesus Christ walked this earth.

Would to God that fallen humanity include him in every phase of life rather than striving to remove him from the face of the earth!

The Root Of All Evil

Dalton Key

A London newspaper once offered a prize to the reader who sent in the best and most original definition of the word, "money." The prize was awarded to a young man who defined it in this way: "An article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider of everything except happiness."

Money is a strange commodity. It makes a good and useful servant; but, if we're not careful, it can become a relentless and cruel master. It can do much and lasting good, if used properly; but it can also ruin and destroy if misused. When seen as a means to ends both right and proper, money is a good thing; yet when considered as the end itself, as life's chief goal, it is a terrible curse.

The Bible does not say that money is evil, but that "the love of money is the root of all evil." (I Timothy 6:10). Money is neither good nor bad in and of itself. Its character and worth depend upon us -- the manner in which we acquire it, the use we make of it, and the attitude we have toward it. The Rich Young Ruler was not condemned because he was rich; he "went away sorrowful" because he put his trust in his riches. (Matthew 19:16-22). The rich farmer of Luke 12 was not called a fool because he had enjoyed a good harvest; he was a fool because he selfishly left God and his fellowman out of his small picture of life. Notice in the three short verses of Luke 12:17-19, he makes reference to himself a dozen times. He was a fool, not because he had wealth, but because he was selfish and self-sufficient with regard to his wealth.

Whether rich or poor, we can become slaves of the "almighty dollar." The young man's definition of money was a good one. Money will buy us everything except what we need most. May we learn to trust in the God who can save us, and not in money.

--P.O. Box 563, Liberal, KS 67905.

A Needed Modern-Day Parable



Several times during the past few years I have come across the following modern-day parable. Who thought of it, originally, I do not know, but it certainly contains some needed lessons for God's people today. It goes something like this:

Many years ago, on a dangerous part of the ocean coast where several shipwrecks had occurred, there was a crude lifesaving station. The building itself was basic and unattractive, and the lifesaving boats and equipment, though adequate for their purpose, were not what one would choose for display. The men who served as lifesavers supported themselves with other jobs, but still were very dedicated to their important task of lifesaving.

As time went by many who had been rescued, along with locals who admired the fine work being done, gave generously to help provide better equipment, a nicer building, and to make it possible to have some paid, full-time lifesavers. This increased interest seemed to make the lifesaving work even more effective, and volunteers joined the crew at an increasing rate.

But, with the increased amount of members and the better facilities, as the years continued to pass the lifesaving station became a popular social gathering place. Its members decorated it attractively and began bringing in more and more items for recreation. They finally built a very attractive building (an architectural showplace) and included all kinds of features for their entertainment, including an ultra-modern kitchen, dining area, and gymnasium. Also, it was less and less convenient for the volunteers to go on rescue missions, so they turned nearly completely to a professional crew.

The result of all this was a popular recreational center, but a lifesaving station that began to be curtailed in its work. On some occasions, due to the station's heavy use for social functions, the rescue boats could not be quickly launched to rescue perishing seamen. So, many lives were lost! The lifesaving work had failed because its emphasis had been altered!

Some Comments

Surely, by this time all readers have seen the similarity between this and the growing emphasis in many congregations of the Lord's church. This analogy is so similar that it is frightening!

It is no wrong for Christians to eat together, nor for them to enjoy recreational activities together. Such can help God's people become better acquainted and grow closer together. The problem comes when (1) we consider such entertainment activities the mission of the church, and (2) when we let these things crowd out and curtail our God-given work of teaching his saving gospel!

In addition, it is not wrong to have paid, full-time preachers of the gospel. The first fourteen verses of I Corinthians 9 give proof that such is scriptural. Yet, we misuse such when we reason that since we

have paid, full-time preachers we have no personal responsibility to teach others (read II Timothy 2:2). A full-time worker should simply **add** to the work all other members are doing, not **replace** such!

Attractive, comfortable buildings and new up-to-date equipment and literature can expedite the work of teaching the lost and edifying the saved. We have generic Bible authority for such. Yet such things should never, themselves, become the center of importance and emphasis. They should only be considered expedients to the soul-saving work by which we glorify God!

The last time I read this parable it was in the religious section of a large city's secular newspaper. A denominational preacher had written the article. Surely this contains a lesson to us: if those in denominations now realize that it prostitutes the work of the church to turn to such social-entertainment emphasis, how much more should we who are members of the Lord's church realize this! Let each of us realize that we have the God-given task

of teaching the gospel to those who are perishing in sin!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

Surely this contains a lesson to us: if those in denominations now realize that it prostitutes the work of the church to turn to such social-entertainment emphasis, how much more should we who are members of the Lord's church realize this!

A Sack Lunch Blessed By Jesus



Don Williams

In John 6, we have the miraculous feeding by Jesus of 5,000 men. It is interesting to note that except for the resurrection of Jesus, this is the only miracle that is recorded in all four biographies of Jesus. This story is found in Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:32-44, Luke 9:10-17, and

John 6:5-15. Looking at this story as found in John 6, the text reveals that as Jesus saw the great company of men coming to him, he asked Philip saying, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (verse 5). Jesus asked this question to prove and test Philip; to see if he exhibited faith and trust in Jesus to take care of this problem. Philip did not see Jesus as the solution, but only saw the greatness of the problem. Daily wages of 200 laborers would not even be enough for everyone to take a little (verse 7). Andrew next spoke up by saying, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (verse 9).

Philip did not see Jesus as the solution, but only saw the greatness of the problem.

Now I have to tell you -- I like Andrew. He was the one who introduced his brother, Peter, to the Lord (John 1:41, 42). Here, rather than seeing the enormity of the problem, he saw a solution, yet a pragmatic one at best. "Lord, here is a boy that is willing to give his sack lunch of five barley loaves (thin, flat pieces of bread, much like soda crackers -- barley was the cheapest grain) and two small

fishes (perhaps like sardines). Yet how far can this food go?" Now I believe we can all identify with Andrew. We tend to see problems for what they are. We may develop possible solutions, but there are often drawbacks to these solutions. His faith was not as it should have been in Christ -- he should have realized that even one barley loaf and one fish would have been more than adequate to the Lord!

What did Jesus do? He did not chastise Andrew and Philip for their lack of faith. Instead, he took the lunch offered by the little boy, gave thanks for it, and gave it to the disciples to distribute to the men to eat. When all had eaten until they were filled, he had them take up the left-overs, so "that nothing be lost." (verse 12). The story shows that twelve baskets of fragments of the barley loaves and fishes were taken up. (Mark 6:43) What was the result of this miraculous feeding of Jesus? Verse fourteen states that the men who saw this miracle believed in Christ and said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come unto the world." Although they tried to force Jesus to become their physical king, leading the Jews against the Romans, the fact is that this miracle produced belief and faith in Jesus.

What does this story mean to us today? **FIRST** of all, we must be like the little boy in being willing to give ourselves in service to the Lord's will. Christ desires for the hungry to be fed today, and he may well work through us for them to be nourished. **SECONDLY**, this lesson teaches us the value of economy, prudence and preservation. Food, resources, money, etc. should not be wasted, but should be used in a meaningful way. (In fact, I've learned that some left-overs are better the second time!) **FINALLY**, by feeding and taking care of the needs of others, we may lead them to believe and obey Christ also. How important is a dish of food or a sack of groceries? To some person, it may be a matter of spiritual LIFE or spiritual DEATH. (John 6:35) "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

--Route 2, Box 713 Guin, Alabama 35563.

Jesus Personally On The North American Continent

BOB LAUDERDALE

In a recent conversation with some visitors to our home, the topic of discussion was directed to the 10th chapter of John. As Bible students know, John 10:16 reads, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

In explaining this verse, our visitors were teaching that Jesus was telling his hearers that after his death, burial, resurrection AND ascension back to heaven, that he would then come to another land and offer them the gospel. They stated that he, in fact, did this, that he did indeed come to the shores of the North American continent, he did indeed present the gospel to the people of this land, and that there is archaeological evidence to this fact, particularly in Mexico. They further stated that the "golden plates" located and "translated" by Joseph Smith, are all a result of Jesus' visit, and that the resultant Book of Mormon is thus authoritative scripture, of equal import with the Bible. The our visitors claimed.

But are these claims legitimate? Bear in mind the Bible teaches we are not to go beyond what is written, see Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18; Judge 3; etc. Just what did Jesus refer to when he spoke of "other sheep"? A little honest analysis will clear it up.

At the time Jesus spoke these words there were two basic divisions of "sheep": Jews and Gentiles. As he spoke these words, he was speaking to Jews. And as a matter of fact, his first mission was to Jews, for he said, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). And as we also read regarding the progress of the gospel, particularly of the labors of Paul, the gospel went "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Romans 1:16). The Jews received the gospel under the Great Commission of Acts 2; the door to the Gentiles (and to the other sheep) was opened at the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10), and the gospel to them was propagated largely by Paul as his ministry was so directed. This is borne out both regarding mission and message in his meeting with the Jerusalem brethren in Acts 15, and in his recounting of that meeting in Galatians 2:9, "...that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision."

Were the people on the North American continent the "other sheep" of John 10:16? Certainly they were Gentiles and were included in the class of

"other sheep," but they WERE NOT the other sheep.

God is not a respecter of persons, Acts 10:34. But if our visitors' contention regarding "other sheep" should be true, that would make Him (God) a respecter of persons. Consider: If Jesus came to

North America, what about people in South America? Africa? China? Australia? etc. They make no mention of these people. Be assured, brethren, "other sheep" of John 10:16 refers to Gentiles.

Via Waymarks

What Worries Preachers

Al Price

What causes mental stress on preachers today are the same things that bothered the apostle Paul.

How the message is received. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote to you with many tears . . ." (II Corinthians 2:4). In First Corinthians Paul had to deal very frankly with several serious problems in the church because the Corinthians had not faced them as full-grown Christians (I Corinthians 3:1-3). Paul "put them to the test" (II Corinthians 2:9) in his letter but he assured them he did it "for your sakes in the presence of Christ" (II Corinthians 2:10). He was so relieved when he heard that they had received his message in sorrow which resulted in their making needed corrections and this made Paul "glad" (II Corinthians 2:2).

Preachers often experience a great deal of anguish wondering whether the needed sermons will be sincerely received into "good and honest hearts," or whether the intended good will result in ill-will.

Care for all the churches. "There is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches" (II Corinthians 11:28). Paul wondered if the churches would continue to be established in faith, partakers of grace with him, and be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. He was aware that some were "quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel" (Galatians 1:6).

There is nothing more uplifting than to hear that our brotherhood continues its work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 1:3). There is nothing more depressing than to hear that some congregations divide asunder, create strife and resentment or no longer walk in truth.

False accusations. In II Corinthians 11-13 one is taken on the inside of the heart of the great apostle, and it is obvious that he was deeply hurt by the false accusation that he was not a genuine apostle with selfless motives. It pained him to have to defend himself with a little "foolishness" (II Corinthians 11:1).

It can be personally devastating (and the family can be hurt also) for preachers, from their vulnerable position, to be mistreated, wrongly accused or their motives wrongly interpreted.

Having adequate financial support. "No church shared with me in the matter of giving and

receiving but you alone" (Philippians 4:15). One certainly gets the feeling that Paul wished more had participated in this good work. These Philippians, however, even "sent a gift more than once" for his needs (Philippians 4:16).

Preachers have the same responsibility as anyone to "provide for his own, and especially for those of his household" (I Timothy 5:8). It is hypocritical to say that preaching is the greatest work in the world and then reward the work with pitiful and inadequate salaries with no long-term security.

Lack of moral support. "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me . . ." (II Timothy 4:16). Paul didn't mind experiencing hardship and grief for the cause, but he probably never thought he would be deserted and left alone to face trial and death.

Preachers have the same basic human needs as anyone -- the need to be commended, appreciated, recognized and defended.

Separation from family and friends. "Longing to see you . . . make every effort to come to me soon . . . only Luke is with me" (II Timothy 1:4; 4:9, 11). Don't you know Paul wished that Timothy, Crescens, Titus, Tychicus, Priscilla and Aquila, Erastus, Trophimus and even Mark could be with him?

Sacrifices are gladly made for the sake of preaching but wouldn't it be considerate for brethren to let their preacher go home on some special occasions to be with long-time friends and loved ones?

We can receive strength and encouragement from the example of Paul. Even though he was bothered by the above, he endured by rejoicing in the Lord (Philippians 4:4), deriving strength from weakness (II Corinthians 12:10), having contentment in adversity (Philippians 4:11), relishing good memories from the past (II Timothy 1:8-12), and looking ahead to the future (Philippians 3:14).

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, TN 38340.

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

OCTOBER 20, 1989

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Providing For Things Honest (Part I)



Wendell Winkler

[Editor's note: The following is the transcription of brother Winkler's lesson delivered at the 1988 Words of Truth Lecture-ship.]

he was a drunkard. All of us know that he was a thief. Back in his earlier days, in fact, he was even responsible for taking a man's life. But, ladies and gentlemen, he was a good man -- compared to his brother." Anyway, sometimes it is a little difficult to find something appropriate to say and that of a practical nature, but I hope that will not be the case in this lesson.

It has been said that dishonesty is a contagious disease and that we are presently having an epidemic.

It has been said that dishonesty is a contagious disease and that we are presently having an epidemic. Our Lord realized the sin of thievery. He taught the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 wherein he said, "A certain man fell among thieves." Furthermore, in the book of Matthew 6:19-21 we read, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." So our Lord recognized that evil. In our discussion of this evil, "Thou shalt not steal" I only want to make three observations.

In the first place, I would like for us to observe just what the Bible says on the subject "Thou shalt not steal." This will in no way be an exhaustive listing or study of these passages, but simply a sample of numbers of others. All of us understand that in the Ten Commandments we read in Exodus 20:15, "Thou shalt not steal." Then there is an expansion of that in Leviticus 19:11, and there the Lord says, "Ye shall not steal" and adds, "neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." There are three forms of dishonesty mentioned in that given passage.

We come over now to the New Testament in Romans 2:21 where we read what the apostle said,

"Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Again in Romans 13:8, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Then after he has thus stated himself, he adds, "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Then again in Ephesians 4:28, the apostle penned, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Again, in Philippians 4:8, Paul exhorts us to think on things that are honest.

When we begin to compile these passages, I think we can readily see that honesty is not only the best policy, but that honesty is God's policy. In fact, I believe we can state that even better: that is, that honesty is a divine principle.

Having just seen, and that in a very brief way, what the Lord said about the matter, I would like for us to make a transition and secondly observe the various ways in which the prohibition "Thou shalt not steal" can be and is currently being violated.

Let us begin in the most apparent way, that is, that stealing -- the prohibition "Thou shalt not steal" -- can be violated by simply taking that which does not belong to us. Our Lord said of the Pharisees of his day in Matthew chapter 23, that "... ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: ..." Again we read in Proverbs 22:28, "Remove not the ancient landmark" that would result in the property that did not belong to them. "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set." We can steal by taking that which does not rightfully belong unto us. It could very well be that many tool boxes and many linen

You will recall the story, no doubt, of years past about the two brothers who were notoriously wicked. There was nothing on the wrong side of the ledger they did not do. They gambled. They were drunkards. They were immoral. They stole. They were known far and wide because of their wickedness. All of a sudden one of them died. The survivor had the challenge. He said, "What in the world am I going to do about the funeral?" He went looking for a preacher, and when he had found a preacher he asked, "Will you preach my brother's funeral?" Knowing how notoriously wicked the brother was, the preacher said, "No." Then he said, "Now wait a minute. Before you answer, I want to tell you I am going to pay you \$1,000 to preach my brother's funeral." The preacher got to thinking about it and was going to say "yes." However, the brother added, "Now wait a minute, don't be that quick. Before we really agree I will pay you \$1,000 to preach my brother's funeral, you are going to have to agree to tell the audience that he was a good man." Well, the preacher was really in a dilemma. He got to thinking about it a little more and finally he said, "Yes, that's all right, I'll do that." And so the day came and there they were assembled for a memorial service, with the entire audience knowing how wicked indeed both of these boys were. So the preacher got up and said, "We have met here in memory of the deceased, and all of us know that he was a gambler. All of us know that

Continued On Page 3



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-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
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A Merry Heart

Joe Spivy, Jr.

Wanted: Laughter! More laughter at home, work and gatherings of the Lord's people. Laughter from a merry heart is a necessary by-product of Christianity. It not only encourages the saved but also attracts the lost.

After the reading of God's law, Nehemiah exhorted the Jews to no longer grieve nor be sorry. They were to be happy "for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). As Christians we have every reason to rejoice because of our assurance in God.

The church, like Israel, can depend upon its God. When God rules the life there is an abundant source of joy. And from that fountain of joy comes our laughter.

Ages ago Solomon observed that, "A merry heart doeth good like medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). Now, centuries later, medical men have found that to be true. Happy people run less risk of physical or mental illness than others.

Happy people run less risk of physical or mental illness than others.

The church, as the body of Christ, needs laughter also. Those who refuse to laugh, dry the bones of Christ. If the body is to be nurtured and made strong, there is a need for more laughter.

The basis of this laughter, this merry heart, is Jesus. Other foundations crumble, but Jesus remains constant. Some are searching for happiness, for a reason to laugh. The Prodigal found it, and there was much rejoicing.

Our joy can attract others, but only if we let them see it. So go ahead and laugh some more. It will do you and the church good! (Proverbs 15:13, 15).

--Rt. 7, Box 206 Fairmont, W. Va 26554.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Second Thoughts About Halloween



David Wade

Last week, my first grader brought home a little school library book entitled, "Let's Find Out About Halloween," by Paulette Cooper. In it she says, "Halloween is a very happy holiday . . . It is alright to play little tricks on Halloween, like ringing a doorbell and then hiding . . . Some people believe that elves, goblins, and fairies also play tricks on Halloween . . . Halloween began a long, long time ago, when people called Celts lived in England. The Celts believed that on one night of the year, in the fall, evil spirits walked about. The Celts' priests, the Druids, lit huge bonfires to protect their people on that night. Later, Christians chose the same time of the year to honor holy people who had died. They called the first day of November All Hallows' Day. The night before was called All Hallows' Eve, and it became our Halloween."

Since the production of this children's book in 1972, there has been a dramatic increase in Satanism, witchcraft, and the occult in the United States. In their book, **Halloween And Satanism**, authors Phil Phillips and Joan Hake Robie state, "If you thought Halloween was a time for cornstalks, pumpkins, apples, and apple cider -- a time for children dressed in cute costumes of witches, goblins, ghosts or devils to knock at your door calling "TRICK OR TREAT", you had better 'wise up!' There is more to Halloween . . . much more! Did you know that Halloween is the day 'witches' celebrate above all other days?" The authors point out that witchcraft is gaining acceptability among many people and that the Internal Revenue Service has granted tax exempt status to the church of Wicca, the official church of witchcraft. This means that a donation to witchcraft is a tax deductible, charitable donation of a religious nature.

The authors contend, "If witches are for Halloween -- a thing of the past, then why are so many young people and older ones alike being swept into the grips of Satan by 'dabbling' in those

things which relate to him?"

On page 153 the authors list the following warning signs.

1. Presence of books on the occult, witchcraft, or Satanism, particularly the Satanic Bible, and/or Satanic Rituals.

2. Presence of heavy metal albums by groups who promote Satanism or the occult, such as Motely Crue or Ozzie Osborne.

3. Occult or Satanic symbols appearing on clothing, or books, or drawings; sometimes a teenager will even draw pictures of rituals.

4. A seeming fascination with murder, suicide, or death in general.

5. Secretiveness, particularly on a consistent basis.

6. An arrogant attitude combined with hostility when referring to Christianity, the Bible, church, etc.

I suggest you read again the article "The Matamoros Monstrosity" by Dave Miller published in Words of Truth May 26, 1989, page 1. This article also appeared in the Gospel Advocate July 1989, page 60.

Already in our area, occult meetings have been held in remote areas and graveyards have been vandalized. There was also quite a stir in North Mississippi in 1987 over alleged occult meetings involving animal sacrifices.

Phillips and Robie ponder the question of what to do on October 31 when children want to dress up in costume and scout the neighborhood in search of treats? They suggest an alternative 'Harvest Party' in which those who come dress up in some costume unrelated to traditional Halloween. They suggest this is much more sensible and safer than permitting children and youth to roam neighborhoods in darkness having to fear such crazy things as 'apples with razor blades in them' or 'drug tainted candy.' There is enough concern in our area that the local hospital is offering to X-Ray any treats gotten at Halloween.

This editor is not mounting a hobby to ride into the ground, but with the increased interest in all the trappings of Halloween, this festivity and our participation in it demands some caution.

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We All Need Encouragement



Edsel Burleson

One of the most powerful things one can share with another is encouragement. Encouragement can prevent a suicide, a divorce, and countless other tragedies. A word of encouragement can heal one who is downcast and wounded. It can

give them the courage to keep trying.

All around are negative, bitter, uncaring people who seem unable to say anything good about anyone or anything. What an opportunity for Christians to be a radiant contrast to the people of the world.

All around are negative, bitter, uncaring people who seem unable to say anything good about anyone or anything. What an opportunity for Christians to be a radiant contrast to the people of the world.

Seldom does a day pass but attention is called to someone's need for encouragement. A man has become an alcoholic and has left the church -- he needs encouragement. A young person has become involved in drugs -- he needs encouragement. Someone has thrown a childish fit and quit attending services -- he needs encouragement. Someone has gotten angry at some little something said in a sermon or Bible class, he becomes unfaithful to the Lord -- he needs encouragement. Someone wants to "be used" in the Lord's work. No one gives him a job to do, so he gets irritated -- he needs encouragement.

William Barclay once wrote: "One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement . . . It is easy to laugh at men's ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word."

Gary Hampton recently included in an article a most heart-warming story from Steve Shelton. Four young men were running in a race in the Special Olympics. By the time he reached the last turn, one boy was far ahead of the others but he stumbled and fell. Parents and others in the crowd cheered the others on to the finish. When they caught up with the boy who had fallen, they stopped, picked him up and ran across the finish line locked arm in arm. All four smiled broadly.

No wonder they call them the Special Olympics.

Moffett translates Eliphaz's statement to Job: "Your words have kept men on their feet" (Job 4:4). The New Testament abounds with instruction for each of us to be encouragers: "Love one another," "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others," "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Paul said, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works . . ." (Hebrews 10:24).

An anonymous author has given excellent instruction in these lines entitled: "THE MAN BY THE ROAD."

If I were the man by the side
of the road
Who watches the world go by,
I'd stop every man with a frown
on his face
And ask him the reason why.

I'd stop everyone with sad, weary eyes
And find out what made him so;
I'd point out to each the Christ
on the cross
And help him His love to know.

I do not live by the side of the road
Where the race of man passes on;
But I meet them each day
on the path of life--
Those wanderers far from home.

You don't have to live in a house
by the road
To scatter the sunshine of love;
But wherever you live, if a man
asks the way,
Just point him to heaven above.

--Via West End News, 420 Seventh Street, S.W.
Birmingham, AL 35211.

Providing For Things Honest (Part I)

Continued From Page 1

closets would virtually be depleted if somehow we could reverse steps and did not take that which did not rightfully belong unto us. I have in my possession from some years back a clipping, and the byline simply reads, "Five hundred thousand shopping carts disappeared from supermarkets." That's 1/2 million carts being taken from grocery stores. And then I have a clipping from the Fort Worth Star telegram, "And they take an astonishing quantity of goods" -- talking about shop lifters. One expert of the subject estimates that they walk off with \$2.7 billion worth of merchandise a year across the nation. The FBI reports that the crime is increasing, and this article says the number of cases is 17% greater this year than in the previous year. So how can we violate this prohibition "Thou shalt not steal?" We suggest first of all, simply by taking that which is not rightfully our own.

I would like to add that secondly, we can also violate this divine prohibition "thou shalt not steal" by engaging in false measurements, unjust weights, and unjust rules. We recall in Deuteronomy 25:13-15 how our Lord addressed this matter, "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." What is God's legislation to Israel? Simply this, that you were not to have false measurements. No wonder then Solomon said in Proverbs 11:1, "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight."

In a third place, we can violate the ethic of "Thou shalt not steal" by engaging in what is commonly now known as "white collar crime." The Federal Correctional Institution on Loop 820 in Fort Worth specializes in inmates, if we can use

that term specializes, who are guilty primarily of three infractions: white collar crime, drug addiction, and alcoholism. When I was preaching for the Glen Garden Church we had, and the congregation there still maintains, a very active work in the prison ministry in that vicinity. I would say, by and large, that those we baptized into Christ out of the facility were guilty of the infraction of "Thou shalt not steal" through white collar crime. What do we mean by "white collar crime?" We simply mean by "white collar crime" the following: embezzlement, stock manipulation, bribery, tax fraud, and consumer fraud. Do you know who primarily is guilty of white collar crime? These criminals often come from the college educated, supposedly adhering to the values of the majority. Their jobs are of the high paying variety, but their opportunities for crime in these areas are greater. One author I read simply says this, "In one day a white collar criminal may bribe a policeman, entertain his wife at the company's expense, receive a TV and a business kickback, bribe a building inspector, cheat on his income tax, print a misleading ad, steal an office desk for his personal use, juggle the company's books for personal gain, and tell his wife to forget the maid's social security tax. That's dishonesty! Who ever thought of the multiple ways in which people can violate this divine principle! Thieves and white collar criminals steal, it is said, more than \$5 million dollars in cash and merchandise not every year, but every day. That's another way "Thou shalt not steal" is violated. [To be continued.]

--Chairman of Bible Department, Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Hiway, Montgomery, AL 36913-4601.

A Pardon Is No Pardon Unless Accepted

Elwood Holt

Many years ago George Wilson was convicted of mail robbery and murder in Pennsylvania. He was tried and sentenced to death. Andrew Jackson, known as "Old Hickory," was president at that time, and after considering George Wilson's case, finally granted him a pardon. That is not so strange. Many pardons have been granted through the years of penal history. But there is a strange part to the story. It is this. George Wilson refused the pardon. Confusion reigned among all concerned over the case. The law-making bodies were baffled. What could they do with a man, under sentence of death, who had refused a pardon, choosing to die on the gallows instead? There had never been anything like it before. And I might say there has never been anything like it since. The case was reviewed, advice was sought and finally the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall ruled: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the parties implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon. But if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang."

A few weeks went by, and one morning as it began to grow light, a solemn crowd stood in the prison yard. A man in prison garb was brought from the prison cell. He walked between two guards, with a chaplain just ahead. Up thirteen wooden steps he marched and came to a stop over a trap door. A black hood was dropped over his head, and a rope around his neck. The knot was made tight under his left ear. The warden stepped back, slowly nodded his head, and the trap was sprung. Like a bolt of lightning, the body fell six or eight feet and came to a sudden halt. The head jerked, the head snapped, a few convulsive movements, and all was quiet. George Wilson was dead. Why? Because he had to die? No, because he refused a PARDON.

Friend, that is a true story. You can read about it in history. It is sad. But I know one that is sadder. It is the story of a lost man. Christ came into the world to save the lost sinner. He gave his life upon Calvary's cross. His blood was shed for the redemption of mankind. God's wrath and offended dignity were appeased, and the road to heaven that had been barricaded for generations of sin, was thrown open. The veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom. Man was invited to enter into the Holy of Holies. The church was established upon the memorable day of Pentecost, the gospel was preached as a fact, inquiring penitents were told to "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sin," man's name was begun to be enrolled in the book of life. The Son of God had opened the way to heaven.

Now men can approach with boldness the throne of God. Now men for the first time could have their sins forgiven. No more yearly offerings of the blood of animals -- the Son of God had removed forever that necessity by the sacrifice of Himself. Man is now called upon to obey the gospel that he might have his sins blotted away, and that he might

finally live forever. But, as many rejected Christ then, many reject him now. Man, lost in sin, is offered PARDON. But the PARDON is rejected. Can you imagine man under the sentence of death refusing that which will prolong his life? That is actually what the average person about us today is doing. Standing in the shadow of the gallows of eternal death -- offered a PARDON -- told that if he will believe the gospel and obey it he may live forever, but refusing the PARDON which will extricate his poor sin-burdened soul. Preferring DEATH to LIFE. It is hard to believe, but it is that way.

George Wilson lost his life physically. If you reject the Lord's mercy you will lose your soul forever. Do you want to do it? You can hear or

Can you imagine man under the sentence of death refusing that which will prolong his life? That is actually what the average person about us today is doing.

read enough gospel in just a little while to learn how to obtain the PARDON so graciously offered by the Lord. If you are wise, you will do it!

--P.O. Box 978 Grand Bay, AL 36541.

"For We Be Brethren"



Don Williams

No one likes a family argument. Now, I know that there will sometimes be fussing and arguing between brothers and sisters when they are growing up. Yet, there is a point when parents step in, before these arguments get out of hand. My parents

knew that when we began to call each other names or began to wrestle, that was the time to stop it. The "squabbling" would end with us having to hug and kiss one another and tell each other that we were sorry. Although sometimes I would rather have eaten spinach than hug and kiss "my sister," I know that important lessons were learned concerning mutual respect and love for each other.

God points out in his word the need for congregations to dwell together in unity. Paul, in Ephesians 4:3 says that we need to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The late, beloved Ira North, minister of the Madison Church of Christ in Nashville for 31 years, called this the "Golden Key to Church Growth." In his book, **Balance**, he said that this is the number one problem facing every local congregation. David knew how wonderful this spirit of togetherness was when he said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

In Old Testament writ, God gives us an example of dis-harmony to learn by. You may recall that Abraham and his nephew, Lot, were dwelling together in the same land. God had blessed Abraham with his being "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2). Lot also had many possessions, and so in a matter of time, strife arose between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. Abraham settled the matter by saying, "Let there be no strife, I pray

thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen: for we be brethren" (Genesis 13:8). He gave Lot the choice of the land, and as the narrative tells us, Lot chose the well-watered plain of Jordon and "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13:12). I am sure that he must have regretted that decision many times because of the eventual problems this city caused his family, but at least the squabble between he and Abraham ceased.

Church fusses and family arguments hurt and can destroy. Let's consider a lesson from history. While visiting Gettysburg, Pennsylvania recently, I read a very sad story. There in the Cemetery Museum, an article told of Wesley and William Culp, who fought there on July 3, 1863. These brothers had grown up and played together in the land surrounding Gettysburg. Yet, when the Civil War began, William joined the Northern forces, and his brother, Wesley, fought for the South. Two brothers -- blood-related, same name, same background and culture -- fighting against each other. On July 3, 1863, on the third day of this battle, Wesley Culp was killed while trying to make a seige on Culp's Hill, the land of his boyhood playground.

Brethren, let us continue to keep that fervent love one for another. We can then do great things for Christ. Let us heed the words of Jesus, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34).

--Route 2, Box 713 Guin, AL 35563.

Brethren, let us continue to keep that fervent love one for another. We can then do great things for Christ.

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peak forth the

—Acts 26:25

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Providing For Things Honest (Part II)



Wendell Winkler

Again, there are other ways the prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal," can be violated. There is fraud. Did not the Lord's brother have somewhat to say about that in James 5:1-4, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-

eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped up treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." Another way to break the command "Thou shalt not steal," is simply by being fraudulent.

But then let me add to that, another way to be guilty of stealing is to be guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism is simply taking material that has been penned by another author and then giving it to and publishing it to an audience as if it were your very own. The late Batsell Barrett Baxter wrote an article a number of years ago called "No Substitute for Integrity," and it is in the December 30, 1971 issue of Words of Truth. In that article this brief paragraph appears, "I have in my library a book which contains some very valuable material. My attitude toward this book changed, however, quite radically, when I discovered an older volume from which whole chapters had been lifted without acknowledgement." The writer of the latter book was perfectly within the law, for the older book had passed out of copyright restrictions, which lasted for 28 years and then could be extended for

another 28 years or a total of 56 years. While the older book was in the public domain and could be quoted without liability, it was not honest to quote it so extensively without giving an acknowledgment of the original authorship. The writer of this latter book lacked the kind of integrity of which we speak.

Another way that we can violate the ethic of "Thou shalt not steal" is by being guilty of the sin of gambling. I lived for a number of years in Bossier City, Louisiana where gambling was rampant. Gambling is a way of life in that city. I can tell you first hand that where gambling runs rampant, it is accompanied by every imaginable kind of vice. Gambling has been defined as "the act of risking what is yours in order to get what belongs to another with nothing given in return." Gambling violates these New Testament principles. It violates the work ethic of Ephesians 4:28-29. It violates the principle of "Thou shalt not covet" which is classified as idolatry in Ephesians 5:5. It violates the Golden Rule given by our Lord in Matthew 7:12. Let us beware of seeking to justify this illegitimate practice, by saying, "but look at the tax dollars" and on and on we thus hear.

Friends, I am discouraged today that there is a breakdown in the moral fiber of America, and sometimes invading even us. This is evident by the fact that we today have no principles that are set in concrete by which we are governed, but somehow or other we twist and bend them according to whim "what about the end" as if the end somehow or other is going to justify the means. We need to reread I Samuel 15 where Saul said they spared the best of the sheep and oxen to offer sacrifices unto God. Then Samuel said in verse 22 of that chapter, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The end never has justified the means, if that means is illegitimate.

Another way to violate "Thou shalt not steal" is by being guilty of income tax evasion. And then

The end never has justified the means, if that means is illegitimate.

another way is by misrepresentation. I want to tell you a pathetic story, but it will be illustrative of the point. Many years ago, I was in a series of meetings, and I had been out during the week to visit this family, such a very nice young family, and he talked about the church, loved the church, and when Sunday morning came he made the announcements. I said to myself, "That's so fine to see somebody like that active in the local church." Well, that night I preached on the lesson, "Have You Counted the Cost If Your Soul Should Be Lost." Therein we were dealing with some things for which men will sell their souls. We dealt with the fact that some sell their souls for pleasures like Demas; some sell their souls for popularity like Pilate; some sell their souls for money like the rich young ruler. Then when the invitation was extended that young man responded, and I was just somewhat overtaken. The next week when I got home, I received a letter from him. He said, "Brother Winkler, I want to thank you for the lesson you delivered last Sunday night." He said, "Year before last, I was pressured to falsify, misrepresent, my expense account, under the threat if I did not, I would not receive a promotion or increase in salary." He said, "Brother Winkler, I didn't do it." He said, "This last year was drawing to a close, and I was pressured again to misrepresent my expense account. I was pressured to falsify my expense account." And here is what just breaks your heart. He said, "Brother Winkler, our little boy was gravely ill last year, and our hospital expenses were astronomical, and under

Continued On Page 2

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor

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Providing For Things Honest (Part II)

Continued From Page 1

threat that I would not get a raise, I succumbed to the temptation and falsified, and I haven't been able to live with me since. Thank you for calling it to my attention again, and I have already set in motion the change that will correct it." We are so grateful for his good heart, and God will forgive him. But see what he did? He misrepresented; that's stealing. "Thou shalt not steal." (To be continued)

--Chairman of Bible Department Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Hiway, Montgomery, AL 36913-4601.

The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Government Report Says Christianity Causes Teen Suicides



Recently this report made the evening news. I gleaned more information about it through Donald Wildmon's Tupelo, Mississippi based American Family Association Journal, dated October 1989.

According to Wildmon, two large religious groups are specifically mentioned in the report as causing some youths to commit suicide.

The 800 page report, published January 1989 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, entitled "Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide," is the culmination of two years of tax supported research.

The section of the report that blames religion for some teen suicides is entitled "Gay Male and Youth Suicide" and is written by Paul Gibson, a San Francisco therapist and program consultant. The study criticizes traditional, and Fundamentalist religions for depicting homosexuality as morally wrong. The study contends that this teaching causes "unresolvable internal conflicts for youth who adhere to their faith but believe they will not change their sexual orientation." If churches teach against homosexuality the homosexual "may feel wicked and condemned to hell and attempt suicide in despair of ever obtaining redemption," says the report.

The government report urges churches to change their beliefs about homosexuality. "Religion needs to reassess homosexuality in a positive context. . . ." The study contends that homosexuality is a "natural and healthy expression of human sexuality."

Furthermore, the report recommends that communities "develop social groups and activities such as dances specifically for gay and lesbian youth" and to "enlist gay and lesbian adults to work with the youth."

We should not be surprised that this "drivel" should flow from reprobate minds. The vexing thing about this report is that we, the taxpayers have to pay for this "research." When we research God's word we find Paul's inspired account of God's judgment and punishment of the homosexual (Romans 1:21-32). We read of Moses' inspired account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the sin of homosexuality (Genesis 19). The homosexual is a sinful person and needs God's forgiveness and moral support from concerned Christians.

We are living in precarious times when the gov-

ernment proposes to tell us what we ought to believe or do about homosexuality. We are left to wonder how far we are from the point where churches may be required to conform to government held views or else lose their tax exempt status.

What Have We Done Today?

We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done today?
We shall give of our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we do today?
We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,
We shall plant a hope in the he place of fear,
We shall speak the words of love and cheer,
But what did we speak today?

We shall be so kind in the afterwhile
But what have we been today?
We shall give to truth a grander birth,
And to steadfast faith a deeper worth;
We shall feed the hungry souls of earth,
But whom have we fed today?

We shall reap such joys in the by and by,
But what have we sown today?
We shall build our mansions in the sky
But what have we built today?
"Tis sweet in the idle dreams to bask,
But here and now do we do our task?
Yes; this is the thing our souls must ask,
"WHAT HAVE WE DONE TODAY?"

— SELECTED

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Words Of Truth

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7:00-7:30 a.m.

Cookeville Church Launches Nation Wide "One Nation Under God" Campaign

The elders of the Sycamore Church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee, have announced plans to launch a nation wide evangelistic campaign called "One Nation Under God" in the summer of 1991.

In a coordinated effort with Churches of Christ throughout the United States, plans are being made for a full page introductory ad in *Reader's Digest*, a direct mail piece to go to every household in the U.S., a week-long series of nation wide television broadcasts and simultaneous gospel meetings across the country.

"This is the kind of effort Christians have been talking about for years," explained a spokesman and deacon at Sycamore Church of Christ. "The technology and resources are available. Our only problem is deciding whether we believe that God will help us do what He's told us He wants us to do."

A local firm headed by a Sycamore member will provide office space, a toll-free watts line, fax equipment and other support. Plans are being made to hire a full-time coordinator, and costs for media, mailing and other expenses are estimated at .17 per household or \$15 million.

"Some churches will want to use funds not

already budgeted for missions and evangelism," said the spokesman. "Others may want to plan special contributions. We hope local congregations will use this campaign as a springboard for local outreach and Bible study."

Plans for the "One Nation Under God" campaign include the following elements:

June, 1991 A full-page ad in *Reader's Digest* will tell its fifty-four million readers of a special mailing they will receive in July.

July, 1991 Each household in the United States of America will receive, by mail, the message of the gospel of Christ. In brochure form, this will be brief, well thought out and well written. It will also include a response card allowing each recipient to request a correspondence course or other Bible study aids.

During the same week, all brotherhood publications, radio programs and television broadcasts will be encouraged to center on this same theme -- "One Nation Under God." For five nights during that week, a network of television stations reaching into every major U.S. market, will broadcast presentations of dynamic gospel messages.

Local congregations will be encouraged to write

letters, make phone calls and promote this event in local newspapers and on local radio and television.

The over 14,000 congregations of Churches of Christ in the U.S. will be asked during the following week to hold simultaneous gospel meetings with local members speaking. Organizers expect that the national awareness generated by the nation wide advertising, mailing and broadcasts will encourage many who would not otherwise have considered attending a gospel meeting to come and hear "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" proclaimed.

"This campaign is ambitious," the spokesman said, "but we can do it if we draw on the resources God has given us. Even a 1% response will mean 1,000,000 interested people. It's time for us to work together.

For more information, please contact the Sycamore Church of Christ, 1144 Crescent Drive, Cookeville, Tennessee, 615-526-5427, or call toll free 1-800-251-6871 and ask for Horace Burks.

There Will Always Be Critics



Edsel Burleson
full of armchair critics who talk a great game.

Once a coach said he knew a fellow who could run the bases like nobody could, play every position on the team, catch better than anyone, and hit 800 in the major leagues! But there was one hitch - he could not get him to lay down his hot dog and come out of the stands! How true. The stands are

The stands are full of armchair critics who talk a great game.

Someone has defined such a critic as a person who "sits 40 rows up in the stands and wonders why a 17-year-old kid can't hit another 17-year-old kid with a football from 40 yards away . . . and then that same spectator goes out to the parking lot and can't even find his own car.

Have you ever seen a mule that could pull and kick at the same time? No, he can do only one at a time. A kicking mule not only does nothing himself, but hinders his mate from pulling his best. Therefore a kicking mule is both worthless and hurtful to his master.

Some professed Christians are like that. They accomplish little themselves and hinder the efforts of those who are trying.

We must determine as did Nehemiah that the

work which we undertake will be that which will serve the Master in the greatest possible way. He said, to those who were criticizing and trying to interfere with his efforts, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3).

Perry Hall wrote the following which appeared in a recent issue of *Bulletin Digest*. When Alexandre Gustave Eiffel completed his 984 foot wrought-iron tower on the Champs de Mars in Paris, France, he had already endured a deluge of criticism. His critics had tried to stop the erection of the Eiffel Tower, designed for the 1989 World's Fair. They mocked and ridiculed Eiffel before, during, and for years after the construction of the 7,000 ton iron and steel structure, which was built at a cost of over \$1,000,000 in 1889 currency.

This French structural and aeronautical engineer built on, in spite of the opposition.

Even after the death of Eiffel in 1923, there were those who sought to have the tower torn down. His supporters, however, stood firm and steadfast. In 1989, France is celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the completion of what was, for many years, the highest structure in the world. With three observation platforms built in successive levels, it served an important observation station during World War I. Today on the lowest platform, there is a restaurant. Since 1953, the structure has been used to transmit television signals. For those who visit the city, it stands as one of the most popular tourist attractions. It seems that Eiffel knew what he was doing.

An unknown author has raised a thought provoking question in lines entitled: "Are You Building Or Tearing Down?" Each of us could profit from some careful personal inventory as we read them.

I watched them tearing a building down,
Just a gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.
I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
As the men you would hire if you wanted to build?"

He laughed and said, "No indeed!
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do."
I asked myself as I went my way,
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care?
Measuring life by the rule and square.
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
Content with the labor of tearing down?
--Via West End News, Birmingham, AL 35211.

"Why?"

Here are a few questions I would ask the world if one person represented the opinions of all:

WHY is a person who conforms to every whim of his peer group "cool?"

WHY is masculinity based on muscles, tans and body hair instead of abilities such as decision-making and leadership?

WHY is femininity based on clothes, curves and dates instead of virtues such as tenderness and righteousness?

WHY is religion a "crutch" while friends, family and social organizations are not?

WHY is the planned order of Creation "far-fetched," but the coincidental accident of Evolution "scientific?"

WHY doesn't the joy, peace, love and hope of Christ appeal to you?

Things Preachers Seldom Tell



W. A. Holley

Preachers speak with conflicting voices. One will be amazed by the differences expressed among preachers. For example, Methodist preachers preach one way, while Baptist preachers preach an entirely different lesson.

Can both be right? Does the Bible teach both doctrines? If the Bible presents contradictory doctrines, who can believe the Bible?

If the Bible presents contradictory doctrines, who can believe the Bible?

How can an honest listener know the truth? The answer is: Do not listen to preachers -- listen to the Holy Bible. Preachers can be right or wrong, but the Holy Bible is always right (Acts 17:11). In Acts 18:24-28, Luke tells of "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures," who did not know the full truth of God. It became necessary for Aquila and Priscilla "to expound unto him the way of God more perfectly." Afterward, he went on his way preaching the perfect gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:6-10). Much of modern denominational doctrines now preached by these preachers cannot be found in the Holy Bible. This scribe does not hesitate to make the foregoing statement because it is the truth.

Have you noticed, the Methodists preach the possibility of apostasy, but the Baptists deny it; the Methodists preach sprinkling or pouring for baptism, but the Baptists say only immersion will do. Question: Are both scripturally right?? All preachers claim to preach only the truth, but do they? Go to the Bible to learn the truth (John 8:30-32; 17:17).

We shall now mention some things preachers seldom tell their audiences--

(1) The Bible teaches that the gospel is God's power to save the believer (Romans 1:16). Denominational preachers deny that the gospel is God's power to save. According to them sinners are saved by the direct operation the Spirit, separate and apart from the word of God. Others contend that sinners are saved in answer to prayer. Some teach that the sinner must have an experience of grace, a feeling which is better felt than told. What they don't tell you is that Christ's gospel must be believed and obeyed (Romans 10:16-21; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; I Peter 4:17).

(2) Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). How many denominational preachers preach this verse? Most denominational preachers spend a life time trying

to find a way round this verse. Why? Because Jesus Christ does not agree with the denominational doctrine of "salvation by faith only" (James 2:14-26). In any school, two plus two equals four. Two minus 2 equals zero. In Mark 16:16, belief plus baptism equals salvation, but belief minus baptism equals damnation. Dear Reader, is this what your Bible teaches?

(3) An inspired preacher, Peter, taught, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Was Peter wrong? Some preachers have gone so far in their opposition to Acts 2:38, as to seek to explain away this great verse. Why? Because most denominational preachers baptized a person "because of remission of sins," but Acts 2:38 teaches that baptism is for, in order to, unto, remission of sins. The statement, "For the remission of sins," in both Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38 are identical. Question: Did Jesus shed his blood "because of remission of sins?" Sinners must be baptized in order to "receive remission." It is better to accept the Bible as it is.

(4) Acts 22:16, reads, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Denominational preachers seldom, if ever, preach or teach this verse. Denominational preachers tend to ignore this verse as if it had been spoken by the devil. They try to have Saul saved on the Damascus road, but, if he were, Saul did not know about it for he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus Christ did not know about it, for he said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Ananias did not know that Saul had been saved on the Damascus Road, for he said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins. . ." (Acts 22:16).

Why did Jesus appear unto Saul? To save him? No! " . . . I have appeared unto thee for this

There Is More To "Doing Good" Than Meets The Eye

By EDDIE WHITTEN

"but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good..." Romans 2:10

PAUL precedes out text by condemning the works of faction, disobedience and unrighteousness stating that wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish shall come upon every soul that worketh evil. He then gives our text which included all men and warns that God is no respecter of persons (verse 12; Acts 10:34). There are many people today who feel they are doing good works in acts of benevolence, compassion and philanthropy. These ARE good works! But the question is whether these are the good works of which Paul speaks.

THERE is, according to Paul in verse 13, a qualifier attached to the "good works." He says that those who are "hearers" of the law are not the ones who will be justified but those who are "doers" of the law. There is the catch. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy

purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of the things in the which I will appear unto thee," said Jesus (Acts 26:16). In order for Saul to become an apostle it was necessary for him to be a witness of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:22; I Corinthians 15:8).

(5) Romans 6:3-4 is another passage which denominational preachers seldom preach. "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." Denominational preachers ignore these verses, arguing that the sinner is saved by faith only, before and without water baptism. But, salvation is in Christ (II Timothy 2:10). One must be baptized into Christ where salvation is located (I John 5:11-13).

(6) Acts 2:47 teaches, "Praising God, and having favor with all of the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Lord Jesus built but one church (Matthew 16:18-19). Those who become "such as should be saved" are, added (by the Lord) to his church (Romans 16:16; I Timothy 3:14-15).

Modern denominational preachers scream to the house top urging people to join the church of their choice. In apostolic times no person ever joined the church of his choice!! Where is the scripture that so teaches? Believe the truth, repent of your sins, confess Jesus' name before men, and be baptized in Jesus' name for remission of sins, and the Lord will add you to the RIGHT church (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 2:38). These words are written for those who honestly seek God's eternal truth.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" (Matthew 7:22). The sincere, honest, religious doers of many mighty works were not justified. Why? Because, as Jesus explains, they did not do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Verse 21). It is not just "good works," but "GOOD WORKS WHICH ARE ACCORDING TO THE LAW"!

TODAY we live under the law of Christ, the New Testament. God has not left us with an ambiguous, vague law by which we are to do His will. He wants us to be saved, but He is the one who has defined the works we are to do. If we will do His will we can expect "Glory, honor and peace." It is up to us - God is no respecter of persons. We can obey Him and reap His blessings or we can go our own way and reap His wrath. The choice is ours. Make the right choice. That is the greatest work man can do!

Via - Waymarks



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus,
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

NOVEMBER 3, 1989

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A Tribute To Frank D. Young

November 8, 1909 - September 14, 1989



Frank D. Young

A Mighty Warrior

Brother Frank D. Young was indeed a true yokefellow in the Lord's vineyard. It was a pleasure to work with him and observe how diligently he studied God's word. He always stood for the truth regardless of the censure or ridicule he might receive. He was as fearless as the early

Christians when it came to defending right from wrong. He never took a stand without first researching the subject to be sure that he was correct, but once he was convinced, he could not be swayed.

Another notable characteristic of brother Young was that he never used last year's notes for his classes, nor earlier outlines for his sermons. He always approached both with fresh thoughts and insights. He absolutely refused to go into the classroom without doing current research.

My association with brother Frank went back many years prior to his association with the Memphis School of Preaching. During the eleven years he taught at the School, his membership was with the Knight-Arnold congregation, although he preached regularly the last several years with the Stanton, Tennessee congregation.

I shall always treasure my association with brother Young as some of the most memorable years of my life. His stand for the truth, his diligent study, and his storehouse of knowledge was a constant inspiration to me. Truly, a mighty warrior has gone home! -- E. L. Whitaker

A Tribute From The Elders

When brother Hearn informed the elders in 1970

of his interest in adding brother Frank D. Young to the Memphis School of Preaching faculty, we were agreeable, although we were not personally acquainted with him at the time. After having the opportunity of meeting with brother Young and discussing the work, it was evident to us that brother Hearn was well-advised in selecting and recommending him.

A warm, close, and very rewarding relationship with brother Young grew from the very beginning. Throughout the eleven years we worked together, he enriched the lives of all the members of the Knight Arnold congregation. He was ever ready to teach a class and to preach when needed. After he moved to Jasper, we invited him to return for a gospel meeting. We were impressed with brother Young's knowledge of the Bible and his depth of study. His love for God and His Word showed in his manner of life. He was quick to show appreciation to the elders for any consideration that he perceived had been shown to him, usually expressing it by letter.

Brother Frank D. Young, so ably assisted by his dear wife, Gracie, has left an impression for good upon us that will never be erased. What a wonderful privilege to have known him, to have been instructed by him, and to have been encouraged by him! -- Elders -- Knight Arnold Church of Christ

A Tribute To Frank D. Young

My first contact with brother Young was when I was a junior in high school. There was one of the so-called "Unity Meetings" in Lexington, KY., in 1939.

I kept up with brother Frank and sister Gracie in many places where he did local work.

Brother Young and I began to work with the Memphis School of Preaching about the same time. I began work with the school at Knight Arnold in January 1970, and brother Young came in December of 1970.

We had a close relationship together in the Memphis School of Preaching. My wife and I and the Youngs made two trips together to the Restora-

tion Country. We thoroughly enjoyed being with them. They were an ideal couple.

I consider brother Frank Young one of the great scholars of this generation. He was a Christian gentleman and a lover and defender of the truth.

In the words of Alexander Campbell at the death of Walter Scott when he said: "I knew him well. I knew him long. I loved him much . . . By the eye of faith and the eye of hope, me thinks I see him in Abraham's bosom." -- By Richard L. Curry

--Via Yokefellow, 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118.

Where Is The Punctuation?

The following articles were written by F. W. Emmons in 1873. As you read the articles, please note that each one is exactly the same, word for word, yet note how different the meaning set forth by differences in punctuation. Much in life depends on where we put the emphasis or punctuation.

The Good Man

is an old and experienced man. In vice and wickedness he is never found. Opposing the work of iniquity he takes delight. In the downfall of his neighbor he never rejoices. In the prosperity of any of his fellow creatures he is ready to assist. In destroying the peace of society he takes no pleasure. In serving the Lord he is uncommonly diligent. In sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances he takes no pride. In laboring to promote the cause of Christianity he has not been negligent. In endeavoring to stigmatize all public teachers he makes no exertions. To subdue his passions he strives hard. To build up Satan's kingdom he lends no aid. To support the gospel among

Continued On Page 2



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Where Is The Punctuation?

Continued From Page 1

the heathen he contributes largely. To the evil adversary he pays no attention. To good advice he gives great heed. To the devil he will never go. To heaven he must go where he'll receive the just recompense of his reward.

The Evil Man

He is an old and experienced man in vice and wickedness. He is never found opposing the work of iniquity. He takes delight in the downfall of his neighbor. He never rejoices in the prosperity of any of his fellow creatures. He is ready to assist in destroying the peace of society. He takes no pleasure in serving the Lord. He is uncommonly diligent in sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances. He takes no pride in laboring to promote the cause of Christianity. He has not been negligent in endeavoring to stigmatize all public teachers. He makes no exertions to subdue his passions. He strives hard to build up Satan's kingdom. He lends no aid to support the gospel among the heathen. He contributes largely to the evil adversary. He pays no attention to good advice. He gives great heed to the devil. He will never go to heaven. He must go where he will receive the just recompense of his reward."

How are you punctuating your life?

--Via East Hill News, Pulaski, TN 38478.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

43 Years On The Air



David Wade

Prior to its beginning, area congregations were notified and Christians throughout Walker County awaited its arrival. I well remember the excitement I felt, as a young boy, hearing the first broadcast. You can imagine the captive audience the program commanded in the early years, as WWWB was the only station in our immediate area and television was yet to come.

The program was a bold new venture for the growing Fifth Avenue congregation. During the "lean" years many of the rural area congregations

November 2, 1989 marks the forty-third anniversary of Sixth Avenue's Gospel Broadcast daily radio program. The program was started Saturday, 8:00 a.m., November 2, 1946 by the late brother Gus Nichols as WWWB began its operation in Jasper and Walker County.

were faithful in their monetary support of the radio program.

Brother Gus Nichols established the format for the program which remains intact to this day. The first few minutes are given to church and community announcements which includes a daily report from the area funeral homes. After a brief prayer, the remainder of the time, approximately 20 minutes, is devoted to preaching the gospel.

During its lengthy history the program has had congenial tenures with three radio stations. WWWB carried the program from its beginning until 1982. WKIJ carried the program from 1982 through April 1989. On May 1, 1989 the program was moved to WPYK a.m. 1010. With this move, two additional changes were made. The program was moved to primetime 7:00-7:30 a.m. The name was changed from Gospel Broadcast to Words Of Truth, the same as our weekly publication.

Throughout its history, the program has been a vanguard for truth in this area. As far as we know, this program may be the oldest daily, thirty minute, live, religious broadcast in the world.

Happy Birthday!

Sentenced To Prison

Bill McDonough

[Editor's note: I have confirmed through the church office (501-372-0161) at Sixth And Izard Church of Christ that this is a current matter.]

My heart is heavy because at this very moment there are three brethren in the country of Nepal that have been sentenced to prison. Krishnar Gopal is facing six years imprisonment for teaching Gun Bahadu and Rama Nanda Joshi the Gospel and baptizing them. These two brethren are facing one year each for having been baptized. They are free on bail awaiting their appeal to be heard, but the future does not look bright.

Nepal has a law that makes it illegal to change your religion. You are free to practice the religion of your birth, but not to change your religion, and since Nepal is over 98% Hindu they intend to keep it that way. You can do two things to help these brethren: (1) Ask Christians everywhere to pray

for them. (2) Write to the king who rules Nepal:

His Royal Majesty
Birendra Bir Bikram, King of Nepal
Royal Palace
Katmandu, Nepal

Please politely express your concern for these men who are good citizens and fathers, whose only crime is that of doing what they believe God wants them to do. Please be polite and respectful or your letter will do more harm than good.

All other avenues of appeal are being exhausted. Your letter may be the one thing that will influence the King to pardon these three brethren. These faithful, brave men are prepared to go to jail for the Master if they must, but they would be much more valuable to His Kingdom if they can remain free. Please pray and write.

--Via Keynoter Sixth and Izard Church of Christ Little Rock, AR 72203.

Your letter may be the one thing that will influence the King to pardon these three brethren.

**Hear The
Words Of Truth
Radio Broadcast Daily Over
WPYK A.M. 1010
7:00-7:30 a.m.**

Providing For Things Honest (Part III)



Wendell Winkler

Another way the prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal" can be violated is by gossiping and tale bearing. Someone says, "Never heard of it." Oh, that's one of the most frequent ways we do violate it. Do you recall what Shakespeare once said, and I can't give the exact quotation, but I can give it in substance:

"He who steals my purse steals trash, but he who takes from me my good name, takes from me [that's taking what's not mine, that's stealing] that which was mine, [not his], makes him none the richer, but leaves me poor indeed." We need all the good influence in this world we can possibly accumulate, and it is the height of folly to say nothing about sinning against God by engaging in whispering and tale bearing, and falsifying, and gossiping, and destroying a person's good name, for you see, our influence is predicated upon our character. Anybody that reflects upon our character, (reflects upon it by telling that which is not right and accurate), takes away from the lustre of our good name, stains our character, diminishes our influence, and all of us are left much poorer. Yet, that seems to be one of the favorite pastimes of so many of us. Thus we need to remember in Proverbs 22:1 where Solomon says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches . . ." There was a preacher who became ill and took a job of managing a farm, and was on his way to town with a very large sum of money to deposit in the bank. When held up and was about to be robbed, he made this statement to his robber, "I have two boys and all that I have to leave them is my good name. That good name is worth more to me than life. If I let you take this money, it will bring suspicion upon me, because some would doubt that I had actually been robbed. Therefore, the only way you can take this money is by first taking my life. If you want it that badly go ahead and shoot." And we have been having too much shooting in our brotherhood. That's stealing. Let us not rob brethren of their good names.

Another way that sin can be committed is by finding and keeping. I was taught from a child that when something was found, we sought the rightful owner, in order that we might return it to the one to whom it belonged. Douglas Johnson of Los Angeles found a canvas sack, and you remember the story from the news, that it contained \$240,000 in small bills. It had fallen from an armored truck. He immediately called the FBI and returned it, and they gave him a \$10,000 reward. But then the unexpected began to happen. He began to get telephone calls. Mr. Johnson was a black man who earned a marginal living hauling garbage. One of the sample messages he received went like this, "You dummy, get a rope and hang yourself, you aren't fit to live." He said another one called him and said, "You made it, but you chickened out." Another one said, "You are disgrace to the black race." Another one said, "You are some type of a crackpot." What has happened to the moral ethic of honesty?

I was taught from a child that when something was found, we sought the rightful owner, in order that we might return it to the one to whom it belonged.

Another way we can be guilty of stealing is by failing to give a good day's work for a good day's pay. A good day's pay is given in exchange for a good day's work, but if I don't give a good day's work, I get something that was given for what I did not render. There is no other way to look at it, but that it is dishonest.

Another way to violate the prohibition is by borrowing and not returning. I know a gospel preacher that let a member of the church borrow a table, and in just a few months it was sold at a garage sale without asking, and the money was never given to the rightful owner. When we borrow, we return. Why? It is not our merchandise.

Then we add to that another way to break the prohibition "Thou shalt not steal" is by being guilty of fornication. That's right. Premarital and extramarital sex is robbery. When you turn back to the book of Genesis chapter 39, you are going to read the very instructive account of Joseph. When Ms. Potiphar tempted him to become immoral, listen to this young man's response, "There is none greater in this house than I. Neither has he (Potiphar) kept back anything from me but thee, [here it is] because thou art his wife." Why did not Joseph go wrong? Because he realized there are some things in life that just did not belong to him. You see, young people, out there somewhere there is that special one for you, whether it be a husband or a wife, and in God's arrangement of matters, you are to be his or hers alone for life. And if you engage in premarital sex, destroying the virginity and the purity of a young man or a young woman, you have taken something that did not belong to you, that potentially belonged to somebody else, and that's thievery. (To be continued)

--Chairman of Bible Department Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Hiway, Montgomery, AL 36913-4601.

Love And Remembrance



Dalton Key

When asked what learning was the most necessary, Antisthenes replied, "Not to unlearn what you have learned."

The great, Greek thinker had a point. Remembering what we have already learned -- what we should already know -- is impera-

tive. But it can be frustrating. In the words of one wit, "A man's memory is what he forgets with."

Consider the Bible. We have learned and read and studied the Bible for years. It has become a regular and important source of instruction. And yet how much of this marvelous book do we remember? How many of the great stories from the Old Testament can we recall, details and all? How many rich, New Testament texts can we locate? How many can we recite?

Paul writes of the gospel, "by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain." (I Corinthians 15:2). How well do we "keep in memory" the sacred truths of scripture?

You say you just can't remember the Bible? Don't blame your thinking equipment. Researchers have calculated the brain's storage capacity at one quadrillion bits of information -- that's a million times a billion. One expert has stated, "If we were able to force the brain to work at only one half its capacity, we could without difficulty learn over forty languages, memorize the entire encyclopedia from cover to cover, and complete the required courses of many dozens of colleges." It is

estimated that most of us use only 10 to 15 percent of the brain's capacity.

And yet you still say you can't remember the truths of God's word?

Strangely enough, many of us have no difficulty remembering the scores of last week's (perhaps last year's?) ball games, the ingredients to our favorite cooking recipes, or the cost, to the penny, including options, of the new car we want. But we have a mental block with respect to the Bible?

Strangely enough, many of us have no difficulty remembering the scores of last week's (perhaps last year's?) ball games, the ingredients to our favorite cooking recipes, or the cost, to the penny, including options, of the new car we want. But we have a mental block with respect to the Bible?

I wonder -- could it be that we remember what we have a deep and intense interest in? Do we remember what we love?

David wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11). God's word was not merely in David's home, or on his shelf; it was in his heart. But how was this possible? Again he wrote, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97). He remembered what he loved.

Could the same be true with us?

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

"Miracle Workers:" An Example Of A Lack Of Faith

Weldon Langfield

While watching a television evangelist on a local station performing so-called "healings," it was interesting to note how he stressed belief. He must have mentioned the word "faith" and its vital role in his perceived healing process every thirty seconds. Clearly, he portrayed it as the most important factor in healing. As the afflicted in the audience one by one closed their eyes while engaging in what appeared to be ecstatic mumbling, this supposed "miracle worker" touched their foreheads and they, seemingly cured of their afflictions, fell into the hands of attendants.

Another nationally known TV preacher in a broadcast stressed faith as the key to wealth. He advised his audience that, upon seeing a desirable house or piece of business property, they were by faith to "station angels at each corner of the building" to preserve it until an offer could be made.

It seems like every time we see or hear one of these characters, they are stressing "faith" as a panacea. Belief is certainly important to the Christian life. The writer of Hebrews indicated, "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). Yet, ironically, the charismatics who emphasize faith severely lack faith themselves. Let's consider some areas in which a lack of faith on the part of such "miracle-workers" is evident.

They lack faith in the Bible teachings concerning the purpose of miracles.

The word of God clearly teaches that miracles had a specific function: to confirm the Word of God (Mark 16:20). Jesus Christ, the apostles and early preachers delivered the truth orally -- it was not then distilled into the New Testament. In order to set them apart from false teachers and philosophers declaring various theories, God put the divine stamp of approval on their messages by enabling these early preachers to work supernatural feats.

Nicodemus recognized this principle when he declared that Christ's miracle-working was evidence of his divinity (John 3:2). The written record of these events still confirms the word today. John said of the recorded accounts of the signs of Christ, "these are written that ye may believe" (John 20:31). Yet when charismatics reject the truth that miracles confirm the word, they reject the miracles of the Bible. Every time a Pentecostal works a so-called miracle, he is saying two things. First, he declares, "I don't have faith in the Bible teaching that miracles were simply a tool of the early church to confirm the word." Secondly he says, "I don't believe the record of miracles in the Bible is sufficient to confirm the word of God today." What a lack of faith!

They lack faith in the Bible in general. While many charismatics believe that Christ is God's son, they in many ways ruthlessly reject Bible teachings. Pentecostal-type preachers allow themselves to be guided by subjective feelings which they believe to be the Holy Spirit. The result is that the words *known* to be those of the Spirit, words "given by inspiration of God" (II Timothy 3:16), are rejected when conflicting with these feelings. The Bible plainly teaches women are not to be preachers (I Corinthians 14:34), yet many Pentecostals feel that certain women are "called to

preach." That Bible teaching is cast aside. The Bible teaches that all fund-raising for the church is to be through free-will contributions (I Corinthians 16:2). Many charismatics believe that just about any way to get money for religious purposes is acceptable. That Bible teaching is cast aside. The Bible teaches Christ's church is to be organized with elders and deacons (I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:4-9). Pentecostals feel that local churches under "pastors," who themselves report to a denominational council is acceptable. Thus, that Bible teaching is thrust aside. On and on we could go. If every passage of scripture which these "purveyors of faith" have chosen not to believe in were "penknifed" out of the New Testament, very little of the sacred message would be left.

They lack faith in their own power. New Testament healers were not afraid of circumstances which openly tested their ability. Christ's raising Lazarus (John 11:43), and Peter's healing of the lame beggar at the temple gate (Acts 3:4-10) are examples. On the other hand, the modern faith healer will do almost anything to avoid a situation in which he may have to perform a "miracle" in a verifiable way. Additionally, if a "miracle-worker" fails to bring about a supposed change in one's health, he upbraids the poor soul for lacking belief.

Faith healers have consistently refused to go to

hospitals or cemeteries to ply their trade. If God has actually blessed them with healing ability, where could it better be used to serve mankind than in a hospital? Oral Roberts' construction of a massive medical facility is nothing less than a tacit admission that his "gift" is non-existent. The early healers - the real ones - had no limitations. Those who came to Peter, "were healed everyone" (Acts 5:16). Clearly faith healers have deep-seated doubts about their own supposedly miraculous abilities. They even lack faith in themselves.

Conclusion. Let's avoid the errors of these self-deceived miracle workers by first realizing the New Testament is God's final revelation. God "hath spoken in these last days by his Son" (Hebrews 1:2). Secondly, let's accept the fact that all of the words of the Bible are authoritative. "Every word" (Matthew 4:4) carries the divine imprimatur. Finally, let's rejoice in the absoluteness of a complete revelation. The finality of the Bible is not a divine handcuff stifling spiritual freedom; it is "an anchor to the soul" (Hebrews 6:19). We can always know where we stand, what is expected of us and what our future will be by studying its pages. In so doing, we will develop faith (Romans 10:17); faith that the so-called "healers" severely lack.

--1000 Highland Road, Brentwood, TN 37027.

Walking With God

JOHN TYSON

Walking is a good exercise for strengthening the physical heart. "Walking with God" is the only method of keeping the spiritual heart alive. If we love God with all our heart, mind and soul as commanded in the first and great commandment (Matthew 22:37), "walking with God" will be our goal in life. The Bible has much to say about this. We will identify a few examples at this time. It will be good for all of us to get our Bible and read the scriptures as indicated to get the full meaning.

1. Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly (Micah 6:8).
2. Please God (Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrew 11:5).
3. Do all that God commands (Genesis 6:8-9, 22; 7:5).
4. Fear God and keep His commandments (Deuteronomy 13:4).
5. Walk before God in truth, righteousness and uprightness (I Kings 3:6).
6. Do that which is right in the sight of God and turn not aside to the right or to the left (II Kings 22:1-2).
7. Fear the Lord and walk in His ways (Psalm 128:1-2).
8. Walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:5-6).
9. Walk by faith (II Corinthians 5:6-8).
10. Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:16).
11. Walk in the light (I John 1:6-7).

12. Walk even as Jesus walked (I John 2:1-6).

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso KEEPETH HIS WORD, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to WALK, EVEN AS HE 'WALKED.'" I John 2:1-6
Via Waymarks

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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Providing For Things Honest (Part IV)



Wendell Winkler

time, but I think all of us understand that we certainly should have it paid when due. Walter Cavanaugh was scheduled to appear in the 1973 Guinness Book of World Records. Do you know why? Because at that time he had 147 credit cards. It ultimately grew to where he had 212 and he neatly pasted them on the walls of his apartment. He added this, "It really looks nice." He is a pharmacist, and he only earned at that time \$300 a week. He said, "I will have to tell you, it is a hobby and has little value. But it is my unusual pastime to observe that I have \$100,000 in credit that means nothing, because I can't afford it." Today, easy credit is bringing many a family down to the level of disintegration. We need to learn to live within our income. You know the old adage, "If the outgo exceeds the income, the upkeep becomes the downfall." So, we need to avoid living beyond our means.

Thus far, we have discussed two points. 1) What does the Bible say about stealing? and then, 2) How can it be violated? Now we close with a third observation. What can be done to correct the situation? What is the remedy?

First, let's start emphasizing restitution. Friends, restitution, indeed, can be very possible but extremely difficult. We need to stress that. The Bible says that the Lord said to Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to your house." But what did he say, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation," what do I do, "I restore it four-fold." It's like the butcher who had been putting his thumb on the scale only an extra ounce or two and charging people for it. Late on he obeyed the

gospel. He said when asked, "What has Christianity meant to you. What change has it wrought in your life." He said, "Number one, I don't have my thumb on the scale any more." And he said, "To the best of my ability, when a customer comes in to whom I have thus rendered that infraction, I give them always an extra ounce or two of meat." That's restitution.

In the second place, if we want to correct the situation, I would suggest that we also begin to readjust our value system. Money is success. How many cars do we have? What credit cards do you have? What restaurants do you frequent? You see, somehow or other, we have become so materialistically oriented, that we judge success on this criteria. We need to go back to the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:4 where he taught us that we can rejoice in the Lord even when we are in prison. Happiness and success are not tied to things; they are tied to disposition of heart and whether or not we are really right with God.

Thirdly, if we are going to correct this wave of dishonesty existent among the people of our day and time, I really do believe that it is going to have to start in the home. Start right in the home. General William Dean was captured by the Koreans during the Korean Conflict. He was given a few minutes to write a farewell letter to his family. What do you think a man would write on an occasion like that? In the middle of that letter is this line, "Tell Bill (Bill was his son) the word is 'integrity'." He did not write the word is "security." He did not write, the word is "popularity." He did not write the word is "money." He wrote the word is "integrity."

I mentioned the Glen Garden Church earlier. For thirteen years I went into a classroom that was used by a teacher of our young people. There was always one word left on the board. Do you know what it was? "Honesty." We need to take that word and to use Solomon's wording, "write it on the tablets of the hearts of our children." When I was a little boy, I couldn't have been over 5 or 6, my grandparents lived nine miles from the little town of Franklin, Texas. My daddy was driving into town down those unpaved roads. There was a sharp curve in the road as we passed a very poor family. Their chickens were out in the yard, and one of those chickens crossed the road right in front of my father, and he ran over it. I'll never

forget what my daddy did. He stopped the automobile and went and knocked on that poor house. He said, "I killed one of your chickens, and I want to pay for it." I don't know that he was liable to where he should have done it, as it was totally accidental. But he said, "I want to pay for it." I can still see him giving her a dollar bill. When I was fifteen I shot up all my marbles in a sling shot. I aimed it one day in the wrong direction, and I broke out Mr. McKinney's window pane. I went home. I didn't want any supper. I went to bed early, and I was sick from inside out. The next afternoon, I went over to see Mr. McKinney. He was painting his house. I said, "Mr. McKinney, did you find a window pane broken yesterday." He said, "Well, as a matter of fact I did, Wendell." I said, "Mr. McKinney, I broke that window, and I wanted you to know that I broke it, and I want to pay for it," and I didn't have any money. He smiled at me from the top of that ladder and he said, "Wendell, if you are honest enough to come over here and tell me that you broke the window, don't you ever worry about paying for it." I never touched the ground all the way home, and Mamma couldn't fill me up that day. Why? I could live with me. Where did I learn that? I learned it at home! If we are going to correct this problem of dishonesty, we are going to have to start teaching basic principles of honesty in our homes, and go back to the Deuteronomy chapter 6 principle where the Lord said, "Talk of these things where you rise up in the morning, when you lay down at night, when you are walking by the way," and therefore, constantly teach these principles of right to our children.

If we are going to correct this problem of dishonesty, we are going to have to start teaching basic principles of honesty in our homes. . .

"Thou shalt not steal." What does the Bible say about it? How is the principle violated? What is the remedy?

--Chairman of the Bible Department Faulkner University, 5345 Atlanta Hiway, Montgomery, AL 36193-4601.

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David Wade . . . Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Words Of Truth Subscriptions, Correspondence, Etc.



David Wade

We want to increase the readership of Words of Truth and you may be able to help us. Perhaps you know of congregations or individuals you think would be interested in subscribing to the paper. Please send us this information with complete mailing addresses. We will be happy to send individuals a few

back issues and will send any congregation a bundle of ten complimentary issues for their consideration.

We want to urge subscriber churches to keep their mailing lists up to date. All additions, deletions, or changes of address for Words of Truth should be sent directly to the publisher as stated on the masterhead. The address is Northwest Alabamian, P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565.

Changes of address are made only on a monthly basis. Therefore, there might be a slight delay in any changes you have sent in. These above conditions apply also to individual subscriptions.

Often changes of address, etc. are sent to us at Sixth Avenue Church of Christ. We, in turn, have to mail this information to the publisher. Please send all subscription information directly to the publisher.

On the other hand, all correspondence with the editor should be sent to Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

Your help in these matters is greatly appreciated.

Knowledge II Peter



Cecil May, Jr.

The theme word of II Peter, is *knowledge*. The epistle begins, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:2), and ends, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ" (3:18). Seven times in this short epistle, the word *knowledge* is used (in KJV; there are two different words in Greek: "knowledge" and "full knowledge"). In addition, "know," "remind," "understand" and "I would not have you ignorant" frequently complement the emphasis.

We are to add knowledge to our faith and virtue (1:5-6). We must, therefore, hear, think and study, for only thus can knowledge be added.

Our knowledge does not consist of myths or man's think-sos. It consists in what the apostles saw with their own eyes and what the Spirit has revealed in Scripture (1:12-21). However, as there are true prophets from whom we have received the word of God, there are also false prophets who give us, not knowledge of the truth, but "damnable heresies," and of whom we need to beware (2:1-19).

Knowledge alone is not enough. Some who "have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"

If We Would Be Strong In The Lord



Winfred Clark

sufficient reasons given? Let Paul tell us. Listen as he says, "that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Again, "that ye may be able to stand in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:13). If there were no such enemy as the devil nor the days of evil did not abound we would not have to be strong.

But, does he tell us how to be strong? Are provisions made to help us? As you read the writings of Paul you will find a number of things to help us be strong.

I. With the TRUTH we are guided.

That is what is meant when he speaks of "having the loins girt about with truth." That means a person's life will be guided in every department by the

truth. Such a person will live a life of righteousness (Titus 2:11-12). That person will do what is right in every circumstance of life. Wasn't this true of Daniel in far off Babylon? (Daniel 1:7). His loins were enclosed with the truth.

There is no doubt in the mind of the child of God about his being strong. Time and time again the Christian is commanded to be strong (Ephesians 6:10, II Timothy 2:1, I Corinthians 16:13). This is not an optional thing. It is something required.

But why is it so important to be strong? Are there

II. There will be the protection of FAITH.

One will be protected from the darts of the devil by the shield of faith. This was surely the case with the early disciples. They faced the storms and struggles of persecution. Take a look at the situation in Acts 4. They had been threatened and told not to speak or teach anymore in the name of Jesus. Such darts are calculated to discourage and defeat the people of God. But what did they do? Did they give in or were they strong? You will remember they would meet together and pray. They kept their faith (Acts 4:32).

III. There will be confidence in the WORD OF GOD.

As one goes to battle, he will have in his hand and heart the word of God. But if a man does not have the confidence he should in the word he is apt to seek a substitute. That will weaken such a person and Paul knew that. He would not say take "the sword of the Spirit" if he did not have total and complete confidence therein. If we are going to be strong as we should this is an absolute must.

There is no reason for us to lose the battles. We can be strong.

--Via Hobbs Street Herald, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

Continued On Page 3

Many Hands Make Light Work

T. Pierce Brown

Somewhere in the dim recesses of my mind I recall a story that went something like this: Many years ago in a small Chinese village in California there was a large gathering in an auditorium when the lights went out. The manager stepped before the audience and said, "All of you hold up your hands." They all held up their hands and the lights came back on. When a startled news man asked, "How did that happen?", the manager replied, "Confucius say, 'Many hands make light work'."

I doubt the reality of that story, although John Heywood had a collection of proverbs printed in 1546 in which he quoted a proverb, "Many hands make light work." He may have been quoting from Confucius, but it does not really matter who said it first. The thing that matters is that it is true in the proper context.

The context in which I wish to emphasize it now is this: Many have written, and more have read, articles something like this: If each person who smokes would give up one cigar a week, and those who drink a cup of coffee would give up that cup of coffee a week, there would be so many millions of dollars available for all sorts of work, with practically no sacrifice for anyone. This is true, and there is little doubt that there is no job God wants Christians to do that could not be done provided two things are true: 1. None of us are concerned who gets the credit for it and 2. All of us are willing to make some kind of sacrifice for it.

The reality is that very few of us have really given up **anything** we needed for the sake of Christ and his gospel. The few times I tried to, God seemed to replace it with more, or something of greater value. I confess that I am bothered a little by Romans 8:17. Paul says we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with him in order that we also be glorified with him." What little suffering I have done for Christ's sake is not worth mentioning, even if I could remember what it was.

Knowledge II Peter

Continued From Page 2

have been "again entangled therein and overcome." It would have been better for them "not to have known" than "after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2:20-22). Our knowledge that Christ is coming must lead us to holy conduct and godliness (3:1-14).

We need to know that our salvation is based on the longsuffering of God and not on our own doing, just as Paul has taught (3:15). However, we must not wrest or pervert to our own destruction the things he has said, as the unstable and wilfully ignorant do (3:16). To use the doctrine of grace as an excuse to sin was a frequent departure from truth in New Testament times, as it is in ours. Paul frequently warned against it (Romans 6), as Peter does here.

The reality is that very few of us have really given up anything we needed for the sake of Christ and his gospel. The few times I tried to, God seemed to replace it with more, or something of greater value.

One of the appeals of the cults, and the cultish among our number, is that they urge, if not demand, sacrifice. The fact that it is often accomplished by high pressure methods which approach brain washing does not mitigate against the psychological and spiritual values of deliberately making a real sacrifice for Christ.

In my judgment, our usual appeals have done us tremendous damage, both psychologically and spiritually, as they start something like this at our baptism, and continue on about the same plane the rest of our Christian life. "The water is warm, the clothing is ready. It is easy for you to respond to the gospel. All you need to do now, since you do believe in Christ, have repented of what few sins you may have, is to say "Yes" or nod your head when I ask you a simple question, then *complete your obedience* by being baptized." So they "complete their obedience," then if there is a desperate need for sacrificial service, we tell them, "If you will just give up 10 cents a day, that will get the job done."

The result is, most start the Christian life with no idea of what Christ meant when he said, "If a man come after me, he must deny himself and take up

the cross and follow me," and end the Christian (?) life without ever having denied himself *anything*, much less denied himself. If this touches you, then please get beyond the philosophical and "iffy" stage, and make whatever sacrifice your conscience and will commend by sending a gift to the Sycamore Church of Christ to help get the gospel message to more than 90,000,000 homes in the United States. Their address is 1144 Crescent Drive, Cookeville, TN 38501. To help you come to some definite figure, why not first ask yourself the question, "How many persons would I like to feel responsible for helping to find a home in heaven?" And then send 25 cents per person for whatever that number is. Remember that many hands make light work, and the job really can be done without any sacrifice if each one who reads this will do what he can, where he is with what he has. To do the whole job Christ wants done will take some sacrifice, but to do this little part of it will not.

--Box 144X, Rt. 2 Wartrace, TN 37183.

A Call To Preach



Bobby Key

In conversation with a dear lady she said: "I think it is a great thing for a man to preach, if he has received the call." Every faithful gospel preacher has been called by God. Is it possible to know that God has called me to preach? Has God, who does all

things well, left such an important decision to man's imagination? Is it possible for a man to spend a lifetime preaching and then discover that God has not called him at all?

God never calls a man to preach who is not capable of preaching. One who is unwilling or unable to defend the truth of God should not claim a call to preach. God doesn't call men to preach who neither believe the Bible, nor intend to live according to its precepts. One who does not believe in the inspiration of the scriptures, the Genesis account of creation, the virgin birth of our Lord, His miracles and His resurrection from the dead has not been called by God to preach.

Every Bible student knows that God has not called women to publicly preach the Gospel. Paul wrote: "I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to learn in silence: (1 Timothy 2:12). Those whom God calls to preach must, ". . . exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2:15). This a woman cannot do since she is forbidden to usurp authority over a man. Men may

Continued On Page 4

To use the doctrine of grace as an excuse to sin was a frequent departure from truth in New Testament times, as it is in ours.

"Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (3:17-18).

--President Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

"They Have Rejected Me, That I Should Not Reign Over Them"

Neil Evans

From time to time various programs of work are initiated to reach others with the gospel or to restore the unfaithful. In most instances these programs are carefully and prayerfully planned by elderships endeavoring to see souls saved. Subsequently, these plans are presented to the congregation with great anticipation and excitement in an effort to "sell" the program. As is the case in all congregations, a few anxiously accept the opportunity of service just as Paul admonished (Galatians 6:10). Unfortunately, the majority are indifferent. The question is often asked, "Why are so many able members of the Lord's church unwilling to work in these various programs?"

There are various answers which we may cite in answer to this question: (1) Failure to recognize the great need, (2) Too many activities of a secular nature which result in the reply "I just don't have the time", (3) Lack of love for the lost, (4) pride, etc. But it seems to me that all of these answers may be summed up by saying one is not really converted to Christ if he or she lacks interest in the programs of work of their individual congregation. It may seem many church members feel that a particular work is incapable of ever attaining the goal which it was begun; or maybe they, for some reason, did not agree with the way the goal was to be accomplished. Oftentimes, due to personality conflicts, one refuses to participate in an organized program of work.

There is little doubt that obtaining maximum participation in any work of the church is a problem, but may we approach a possible solution

from this perspective. God in His infinite wisdom planned for the salvation of men and such was to be accomplished through His Son (Ephesians 1:5, 10) as head of the church (Colossians 1:13-18). It is through the church today that God carries on His work (I Peter 2:9). Christ maintained while on earth that his purpose was one with the Father (John 10:30; 17:21), and that purpose was to draw men unto Him for salvation (John 6:44; 12:32, 46-50). Today men are drawn to Christ through the gospel. After learning and obeying the gospel, Christians ought to be interested in teaching others (Hebrews 5:12). Most of the programs of work organized by a local congregation are for the intent of teaching one how to become and remain a Christian. It seems, however, that many members of the Lord's church have an attitude that if the elders (or leaders of the congregation where elders have not yet been appointed) initiate a program, it does not directly apply to them. According to Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28, and I Peter 5:1-5; God has ordained, appointed, or given authority to elders for the purpose of overseeing, watching for, and feeding the church - purchased by His Son. These commands are explicit and certainly underscore the awesome responsibility of these men appointed as elders in the Lord's church.

Some would argue that Christians should not think that apathy toward many organized programs of work is wrong because such programs are of human origin. However, as we have pointed out, elders have the God-given authority to enact such programs and Christians should be submissive to their pleas - as long as they are in harmony with the will of God. When we develop

an attitude of resistance toward the work of the church, we are in fact resisting God. In I Samuel 8:7, Samuel felt as though the Israelites had rejected him because they desired a king to rule over them as did the other nations. God recognized that the problem was not with Samuel, but with the people, for they had developed an attitude which caused them to reject the will and authority of God. The churches of Christ believe and teach that for one to be pleasing to God, we must do that which God has authorized. We recognize the authority God has given to elders regarding matters of judgment. We must be careful and prudent when addressing the matter of involvement in the work of the church lest we develop an attitude like unto the Israelites in I Samuel 8:7 and reject God. We should also realize that we will be held responsible for our decisions and strive to avail ourselves of every opportunity.

--Deacon Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper, AL 35501.

When we develop an attitude of resistance toward the work of the church, we are in fact resisting God.

A Call To Preach

Continued From Page 3

call women to publicly preach and even ordain known lesbian women to fill their pulpits, but God does not call such to preach His gospel. There are many things a Christian woman can do in the church, but a woman who believes the Bible will never claim that God has called her to preach.

God does not call men to preach unless they are careful to preach only what God wants preached. Liberal preachers, who are so broad-minded as to accept all the different theories of our denominational neighbors, have not been called by God to preach His Word to a dying world. A man's attitude toward Divine truth reveals his standing before God. John said, "We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (I John 4:6). God's men preach only a "thus saith the Lord."

God indeed calls men to preach today! He calls preachers in the same way he calls aliens to become Christians -- by the Gospel. Paul wrote, "He called you by our gospel" (II Thessalonians 2:14). Men who claim that God has spoken to

them in "a still small voice" or in a dream, may be honest, but they are no doubt mistaken about being called to preach. Men who are content with God's Word will not always be looking for a special miraculous call -- they are far too busy learning and doing what God has said. If you are a faithful Christian man, with a love for lost men, a good knowledge of the Bible, and the ability to preach it effectively, then, my brother, you need no further call.

--324 17th S.W., Miami, OK 74354.

If you are a faithful Christian man, with a love for lost men, a good knowledge of the Bible, and the ability to preach it effectively, then, my brother, you need no further call.

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Words Of

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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"Fifteen Seconds That Seemed Like An Eternity"



Don Williams

It was Tuesday, October 17th, at 5:04 in the afternoon. Most of Oakland and San Francisco, California were rushing to get home to watch the baseball game. In San Francisco, there was renewed hope that with the ballgame in their home (Candlestick Park), they had a good chance of winning the third game, and

perhaps the next two games after that. But all these thoughts were completely forgotten in a matter of fifteen seconds.

Fifteen seconds. It is about the length of a short redlight. It takes about fifteen seconds to put one's shoes on and tie them. But on that Tuesday, it was this length of time that rocked the San Francisco area. The earthquake, registering 6.9 on the Richter scale, caused apartment buildings to fall, interstate highways to buck up and collapse, bridges to sway, a huge fire to roar out of control -- all in about fifteen seconds. Afterwards, the ballgame meant very little. In later interviews with the ball players, their immediate concern was the safety of their families, either in the baseball park or back at home. No one was concerned about the Series, or about the fact that San Francisco was two games behind.

Now I do not believe that this earthquake was sent to the people of San Francisco or Oakland. I do not believe that God was punishing the people there in this fashion, just as he was not punishing Charleston, South Carolina when Hurricane Hugo hit it, or Guin, Alabama when the tornado hit here back in 1974. However, these catastrophic events do bring into clearer focus various passages of scriptures that deal with the importance of the Christian life. Consider these scriptures:

These catastrophic events do bring into clearer focus various passages of scriptures that deal with the importance of the Christian life.

"O God, I know that the way of man is not in himself -- it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23).

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is,

there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (I John 2:15a, 17).

"Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; whereas, ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that." (James 4:13-15).

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Proverbs 27:1).

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2).

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

The Palm Tree

T. Pierce Brown

As I was reading Psalm 92:12-15 in the NASB, I got a very uneasy feeling. For those who may not have access to that version, it reads as follows, "The righteous man will flourish like a palm tree, he will grow a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him." The KJV says, "He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon," and this is probably the meaning of the writer.

Whether I was bothered by the expression, "They will still yield fruit in an old age," or whether "They shall be full of sap and very green" disturbed me the most I do not know. How little fruit I am bearing at this age was probably the

focus of my attention.

But as I meditated on it, my memory took me back to the palm trees I have seen in past years, and to what I have read about them, and I wondered if indeed those of us who think we are reasonably righteous fit the description and nature of the palm tree.

The palm trees I remembered had a beauty and stateliness that attracted my attention. I am told that the palm tree begins to bear fruit at about 8 years of age, and continues to bear for more than a century. That, by itself, is worthy of note. I have known of some persons who claim membership in the Lord's church who think of themselves as righteous, but barely did get planted. And if one expects to see bloom, leaf or fruit he would be

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Words Of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
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Will You Stand?

Weldon Langfield

God expects each Christian to stand firmly for the truth. Ephesians 6:14 admonishes, "Stand, therefore." When Christ said in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad," he indicated that everyone takes a stand of some kind. Unfortunately, the position taken is not always what God desires. Let's consider some stances taken by brethren.

Some Stand for Sin

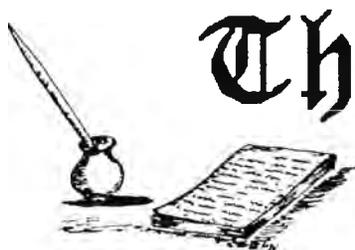
It is tragic that some in the Lord's church seem to always come out on the side of sin. After a plain sermon on drinking or dancing, there they are to defend worldly members. Such Christians minimize the wickedness of committing suicide a cigarette at a time. They see nothing seriously wrong with loose morality or membership in competing religious organizations such as the Masons. When church discipline is exercised, these fence straddlers gush with sympathy for the object of discipline while grumbling against the conscientious elders who have the courage to enforce God's law.

Some saints would do well to remember the Proverb, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 17:15).

Some Stand for False Teachings and False Teachers

In some places the Lord's church is riddled with false doctrine. Faithless preaching can be accomplished by omission. Teaching which excludes any mention of the first principles, hell, the non-use of instrumental music and other subjects that might be offensive to the worldly and half-converted is, very simply, error. In other places serious inaccuracies are boldly proclaimed

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Let Thanksgiving Continue



David Wade

Our Thanksgiving holiday is an American tradition. It should remind us of our need to give continual thanks unto God every day for all the wonderful blessings we receive from his benevolent hands. Robert Lintner said, "Thanksgiving was never meant to be shut up in a single

day."

It is a fact that when people forget to give thanks, they forget the source of their blessings. The chief butler forgot the goodness of Joseph (Genesis 40:23). Later, a new Pharaoh forgot the salvation of his nation through Joseph (Exodus 1:8). Thanklessness was one of the condemning sins of the ancient world (Romans 1:21). Paul predicted perilous times for future generations, "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, head strong, haughty, lovers of pleasure

rather than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:2-4).

To overcome the problems of thanklessness God commands us to give thanks in everything. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

In addition to giving thanks in everything, we are urged to continually give thanks. "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Giving thanks to God involves much more than the "words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart." It involves acceptable service to Him. The Psalmist asked, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). His answer was, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all his people" (vss. 13-14).

Paul urges us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Burton Hillis states the case well, "I don't think the Lord wants any pompous proclamation of thanks on one Thursday in November as much as he wants a little humble service from us every day in the year."

Making The Best Of The Worst

Douglas F. Parsons

There is nothing that can happen to you that God can't make work out for your good. God can take the worst things that happen to you and work them into the best things that ever happened to you.

Someone has suggested life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it. During a storm if the eagle tilts its wings up, it will rise, using the winds to carry it above the vicious storm. With eagles or us, the set of the wings determines a smashing fall or a smashing victory.

The old militarist was right. "The battle is always won the day before it is fought." We prepare for the worst circumstances in advance before we lose our head or our "cool." When the worst circumstances befall you, don't look into yourself but look up to God. If you look within - focusing on your feelings, pity, despair, and what all is impossible for you - things will get worse. Self-consciousness gets you no more strength than your own. Trusting God gets you the very power and grace of God.

Hurts and troubles can be your worst enemies or your best friends. They can be destructive or constructive and you are the doctor! If the worst

that happens to you is at least allowed by God to happen, God must have some good purpose to work out of it.

Until it was subjected to ages of extreme heat and intense pressure in the earth, carbon was but a common, soft, cheap and dirty substance. After allowing it to be subjected to heat and pressure, God was able to make it into a diamond. But even the diamond wasn't all that beautiful or valuable until it was subjected to the gemologist's sharpest blows and cuts and friction. The finest gems cannot be polished without friction, or persons perfected without the heat and hurt of life.

Someone has said, "Christians are photographs of Christ, but in the darkroom of sorrow and affliction, God develops some of his loveliest characters." If God could take Jesus' cross and make that awful thing into the best thing that ever happened, He will cooperate with you, converting the worst things that happen to you into the ultimate good for you and Him. But there is a big IF - if you love Him and are living according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

--Via "The Admonisher" Bossier City, LA

Will You Stand?

Continued From Page 2

on a regular basis.

Some brethren are relatively undisturbed by blatant disregard for the truth. This writer spoke to a fairly well-studied deacon in a church in which the preacher had taught that Christ wasn't literally coming again and Bible predictions to the contrary were "mistakes." While the officer was mildly disturbed by these pronouncements, he seemed to look upon them as simply foibles of the minister. It makes one wonder, just what errors would be considered serious?

Some congregations readily use proven false teachers for meetings and lectureships. Others eagerly fellowship congregations that have departed so far from the faith, it is doubtful that they remain "churches of Christ" in the eyes of God (Revelation 2:5). Clearly, brethren who support such activities tacitly or actively are taking a stand -- a stand for transgression.

Some Stand Against Error in Other Places

Some will bury their heads in the sand over almost any problem in their home congregation,

while denouncing error elsewhere. In one place a so-called "gospel preacher" railed against liberalism at a church across town while a member of his home congregation had for several months been working as a bartender, was on her third unscriptural marriage and was teaching a Bible class. When asked why he didn't raise strong objections he commented that he "didn't want to make a big splash." The fact is he didn't want to make any splash at all. Maybe he was afraid of getting the checkbook wet.

Some preachers berate error elsewhere while the same error is being taught, in perhaps a different form, under their noses. Some decry the loss of distinctiveness of the church while their own congregation marches in the footsteps of the large sectarian churches by spending hundreds of thousands of desperately needed contribution dollars on gymnasiums and other forms of entertainment. Others make bold pronouncements against the Boston church movement while their own congregation may be ruled by a preacher or

"Diotrophes-style" elder. The Pharisees were obsessed with the sins of others while inside they were "full of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). In principle that is what we do when we clearly see sins in other assemblies, but refuse to see our own.

Some Stand Against Errors of the Past

Some are very firm on past controversies -- premillennialism, the "one cup" issue, the anti-institutional question, etc. when it comes to the current problems now ravaging the church, however, they are silent. Some congregations are filled with leaders that will never decidedly address the subjects of divorce and remarriage, the unity in diversity heresy, salvation by grace alone, or the multiplying ministries movement. They would never dream of encouraging a series of lessons on the work of the Holy Spirit or the one true church. While it is unlikely that many brethren are going to be persuaded to use one cup at communion, the aforementioned current issues are serious threats to faithful Christians and have already taken an enormous toll.

God Wants Us to Stand for the Truth

Paul wrote, "Stand fast in the faith" (I Corinthians 16:13). Jude likewise admonished, "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (V. 3). God has equipped us to stand fast by giving to each Christian "the spirit . . . of power" (II Timothy 1:13). With that spirit imparted through the word of God, we are not to be selective as to when and where we stand, but to be "instant in season, out of season" (II Timothy 4:2).

The Christian who dauntlessly stands with God regardless of his surroundings will have Divine strength and support. As Paul wrote, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Even though some men may be offended by such fortitude, Christ's love will always sustain the faithful. Paul continued in the same chapter, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

--1000 Highland Rd. Brentwood, TN 37027.

The Palm Tree

Continued From Page 1

very disappointed.

It might be a worthwhile exercise, in case you have read this far, to take a 3x5 card, or postage stamp, or something of the sort and write down what you have done for the Lord in the last month or so. I am not talking about the times you may have been present at the church building. The hen being in the chicken house, and even the fact that she cackles, does not mean she has laid an egg, and the fact that the cow came up to the barn to be fed does not mean she gave any milk.

It does not disturb me so much that the average church member has not ever led a soul to Christ. For what the other person does with the gospel after you teach him is not always your responsibility. But what you do with it is. It does disturb me that the average -- and even far above the average -- church member not only has not led a soul to Christ. He has no real intention of making any deliberate effort to do so, as far as we are able to tell.

The palm tree is probably one of the most useful of all trees known to man. From it comes dates for eating, lumber for building, fiber for making mats, baskets, rope, etc. I believe one can find at least 100 or more things for which the palm tree is useful.

Does that have any application to you? I know of preachers who seem to think that the limit of their responsibility is to speak from the pulpit. I admit that it is possible that many preachers fritter away their time and limit their effectiveness by trying to be all things to all men. That is, they are organizers and administrators. They are on all sorts of committees, speaking to all kinds of gatherings, doing all kinds of busy work, especially that which

lends itself to some prominence or prestige, when their primary job is to preach the word. But the truth is, there is no limit to the areas in which a preacher can do good except his ability and opportunity.

The kind of thing of which I am being slightly critical is the preacher who can fish, play golf and preach, but can seem to do very little more in the cause of Christ. And I am not down-grading the values of fishing and playing golf, for they can be very relaxing and therapeutic for the overworked preacher. But I have known song leaders who were asked to do some other task, such as teach a class or be on a visitation team who seemed to think that song leading was such a great responsibility that they could do nothing else.

Did you ever know of anyone who seemed to think that it was his primary responsibility to warm part of a pew for a few minutes on Sunday morning?

To any of those kinds of persons, as well as to the rest of us, I think a re-examination and meditation on the fact that "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree" would be of value. How much like the palm tree are we? Are we just full of sap and very green, or do we try to make ourselves useful in all the areas in which we can serve? Are you willing to do what you can, where you are, with what you have for the glory of God and the good of man? If you are, we urge you to pause for a moment right now and write down some special thing you are going to do for God and/or man this week that you have not been doing, then do it!

--Box 144X, Rt. 2 Wartrace, TN 37183 (615) 454-9042.

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Forget The Bag And Come To Worship



Dalton Key

The owner of a small country store was once appointed postmaster. But a full six months later, not one piece of mail had left the office. When the postal authorities came from Washington to investigate, the postmaster explained, "It's

simple. The bag ain't full yet!"

How many of us are neglecting to do the good we know we should do, waiting until circumstances are absolutely perfect, until "the bag gets full."

How many of us are neglecting to do the good we know we should do, waiting until circumstances are absolutely perfect, until "the bag gets full."

Some of us can't come to worship services. And why? The weather is too hot; or too cold. We haven't been feeling well. We barely find energy to work all week, play all weekend, and attend whatever ball game we can find. Or we are feeling too well to spend a beautiful Sunday indoors in worship services. The church members are too cold and unfriendly; or they are so friendly we can't get away from the building as quickly as we

would like. The folks who go to worship are hypocrites who are not sincere in their religion; or they are a bunch of fanatics who take their religion too seriously.

We may as well admit it. For many of us, with excuses as lame as these, our bag will never get full -- it has too many holes! One lady said she couldn't come to worship services because she lived too close to the building to drive, but too far away to walk. Don't laugh. After all, one excuse is just as good as another.

Why not forget the excuses -- forget "the bag" -- and be in worship services Sunday? Take another look at Hebrews 10:25. And then read the next verse, verse 26. Attendance is serious business.

--Box 563, Liberal KS 67901.

It Takes Steam To Make The Engine Go!



Edsel Burleson

One day a number of men were standing beside a locomotive. One said to the others: "Supposing this engine represented the church, which part would you choose to be?" One said he would like to be the great driving-wheels; another, that he

would be willing to be the truck-wheels, if only he could keep on the track; another said that he would like to be the headlight, and show up all obstructions and dangers in the way; another said he would like to be the pilot and clear the track of every obstacle; still another wanted to be the whistle and sound out God's praises; another, the bell to call all men to prayer and righteousness; one thought they might get under too much headway, and he said he would have to be the brake and hold them down. They had all spoken but one who was then asked to choose his place. The young man stood silent for a moment, then replied; "Well, I don't really know, but I would as soon be the coal as anything else, since it is necessary to make the engine go."

Team work is essential to the accomplishment of the purposes of any group; but it will also take "steam" work to succeed. Team work may not include anything more than planning, and drawing up blueprints. Mere "team work" may build and equip a great ship, but it will take "steam work" to cross the sea and land its cargo safely. Unity in planning is not enough. There must be unity in executing well arranged plans. The church needs

more people who are anxious to "put their shoulders to the wheel" to perform the "steam work" without which the church cannot go forward. Nehemiah wrote: "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6).

The apostle Paul pleads for the proper "steam" for evangelistic, benevolent and educational programs when he penned, ". . . that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

The church needs more people who are anxious to "put their shoulders to the wheel" to perform the "steam work" without which the church cannot go forward.

The story is told of a hired hand who performed several dangerous tasks for a woman who employed him to prepare an old barn for use. He killed a deadly snake, and a poisonous spider, and then he coaxed a huge bull into a stanchion. One last duty, however, he refused to perform because he claimed it was too dangerous. This task removing a hornet's nest. Surprised at this fear, she asked him why, since he had done everything else she had asked. "Madam, I am not afraid of snakes, or bulls or spiders, but I am terrorized of hornets -- they are organized."

Those in the local congregation must work together for the desired goals to be realized -- for progress to be made. When members are working together, they are not looking for individual recognition: they are looking for results! Their

primary concern is seeing that the Lord's work is done.

Each should develop the concern expressed by the poet in these lines entitled: "Where Shall I Work?"

"Father, where shall I work today?"

And my love flowed warm and free.

Then He pointed me out a tiny spot

And said, "Tend that for me."

I answered quickly, "Oh, no! Not that!

Why no one would ever see

No matter how well my work was done.

Not that little place for me!"

The word He spoke, it was not steam;

He answered tenderly,

"Little one, search that heart of thine;

Art thou working for them or me?

Nazareth was a little place,

And so was Galilee."

--Via West End News, 420 Seventh Street, S.W. Birmingham, AL 35211.

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Words Of

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

--Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1989

NUMBER 47

The Heart Of The Problem

Max Lucado

Let's say you have a car. And let's say that car is running poorly. Rather than having the purr of a kitten, it has the cough of a three pack a day smoker. Rather than gliding down the road like a luxury liner, it yanks and jerks like a bull in a rodeo. You describe your problem and the mechanic confidently tells you to wait while he goes to get "just the thing" to fix your car. He returns carrying -- not pliers or gauges or a screwdriver -- but a can of car wax. "What your car needs is a good wax job!" he exclaims. "Let me have an hour with her and she'll be shining like new." That sounds a bit odd, but who are you to question? So you leave your car to the polishing mechanic.

An hour later you return. True to the mechanic's word, your car boasts a brilliant shine that it hasn't had in years. Enthused, you hop in. "Now, this car is gonna go!" But go it doesn't. It shines, but it's still sluggish. It sparkles, but it's still slow. The well-meaning mechanic doesn't give up! He's got all kinds of solutions to your car problems. New roof. Whitewall tires. Fender guards. Fog lights. All add zest to the outside, but nothing puts zip on the inside. Do you really want to know?

A housewife battles with depression. Suggested solution by some misguided mechanic? Buy a new dress. A husband seeks advice for his marriage that is riding on the crest of a wave about to be slammed into the rocks. Suggested solution? Bail out? A dying church flounders like a fish on a beach. What can be done to bring life into the congregation? "Let's build a building!" someone suggests.

Case after case of treating the outside while ignoring the inside. We polish the chrome and neglect the engine. The housewife gets a new dress and her depression disappears! . . . for a day. Then the shadow returns. The husband trades his wife in for a new model. The result? Happiness! . . . for a while, then the same personality traits that got him in trouble the first time go to work again. The church meets proudly in its new facility and the ranks swell with enthusiasm! . . . for a few months. Then the flames flicker and dies, leaving a cold church in a new building.

The exterior polished, the interior corroding. The

outside altered, the inside faltering. Cosmetic changes are only skin deep. Perhaps that's why Jesus and the religious leaders were always singing different songs. The religious leaders thought an outside reformation would be sufficient. Jesus, however, took them to the heart of the problem, which was, and is, the problem of the heart. Remember the point: The next time your spiritual walk sputters and spews, don't polish or paint; instead, penetrate. Go to the "Master Mechanic." It

may very well be time for an overhaul.

--Via Bulletin, Attalla Church of Christ.

The exterior polished, the interior corroding. The outside altered, the inside faltering. Cosmetic changes are only skin deep.

"A City Which Hath Foundations. . ."



Don Williams

Long after the tragedy of the San Francisco earthquake has passed from our minds, and the city returns to as normal a life as can be possible, there will still be lingering questions concerning the destruction of Interstate 880. On Tuesday, October 17th, the earthquake hit at 5:04 p.m. causing a 1.25 mile section of I-880, in West Oakland, the oldest double-deck freeway in California, to collapse.

A key factor in this disaster was the columns used to support the freeway's double decks. During the quake, the support posts that separated the upper and lower portions of the freeway appears to have popped out of place, allowing the top level to drop down onto the lower level. This sandwiched in many of the cars on the lower level, which were

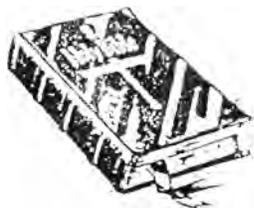
slowly inching along during "rush hour." So far, 39 bodies have been recovered in the slow clean-up process of this one-mile stretch of interstate highway.

It has been reported that engineers supposedly thought that this interstate could bear up under an earthquake registering as high as 8.0 on the Richter scale. The earthquake on Tuesday measured 7.0 in intensity. At the time this portion of interstate was built (1955-1957), the cost of the project cost ten million dollars. It took 56,000 cubic yards of concrete and 17,000,000 pounds of steel to construct. Still, it was not enough.

This catastrophe is a sad reminder that at best, the things of this world will perish. No one will forget the story of the maiden voyage of the "unsinkable" Titanic and of her early grave. Now, in spite of the work efforts of man, that which was thought to be safe, was not. That which they thought could endure an earthquake, did not. When Jesus comes back again to judge the world, all of men's works, structural and otherwise, will perish. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great

Continued On Page 2

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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News Release

A current listing of missionaries in churches of Christ serving outside the United States has been compiled during the last few months and is to be published as part of a **1990 World Missions Calendar**, scheduled for release in early December.

According to statistical surveys conducted by Sunset School of Missions, the number of preachers on foreign soil supported by American churches and individuals has decreased in the past years. Another alarming discovery is that the average stay on the field is less than two years, hardly enough time to become adjusted to the new culture and language. The purpose of combining the listing of workers on the field with a calendar is to encourage Christians to pray each day for the missionary whose name and country is printed on that date. A greater concern for preaching the gospel around the world will be generated by the daily use of the calendar.

The compilation of known missionaries has been a cooperative effort utilizing many resources that began with a letter sent to thousands of churches of Christ this summer, asking for the names and addresses of workers they support in foreign countries. Their excellent response was also supplemented significantly by Mac Lynn, Chairman of the Bible Department, David Lipscomb College; Gerald Paden, Instructor, Sunset School of Preaching; Tex Williams, Director, World Bible School, and many others. Johnny Henson of Star Bible Publications conceived the plan and initiated the compilation of data which has been recorded by Mrs. Vernon Simpson. The publication will feature photographs, both black and white and color, of many families who are working around the world supported by churches of Christ in America. The list includes over 700 entries of missionaries' names, addresses and supporting churches.

For ordering information call 1-(800)-433-7507.
--Alvin Jennings, Box 821220 Fort Worth, TX 76182, 1-800-433-7507.



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Destroy The Seed Of Evil



David Wade

regret it," said the swallow. The birds paid no attention to the swallow's admonition.

By and by, the hemp grew up and was made into cord and the cords into nets. Many of the birds who had despised the swallow's advice were caught in nets made out of that very hemp.

The moral of the story is, "Destroy the seed of evil, or it will grow up to your ruin."

How well this fable illustrates the teaching of Paul, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit

reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:7-8). Aesop relates the story of the farmer sowing hemp seed in a field where a swallow and some other birds were hopping about picking up their food. "Beware of that man!" said the swallow. "Why, what is he doing?" asked the other birds. "That is hemp seed he is sowing. Be careful to pick up every one of the seeds, or you will

it reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" (Numbers 23:10). Balaam could not die the death of the righteous because he had lived the life of the wicked (Numbers 31:8, 16). Peter describes Balaam as one "who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:15). Truly, Balaam reaped what he sowed. It has been said, "Sow a thought, reap and act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."

Jesus said to the rich man who lifted up his eyes in torment, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise, Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented." (Luke 16:25).

All need to learn the lesson by admonition and not by experience that God "Will render to each one according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). Paul states the choice clearly, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13).

Each day we are sowing seed. We are either sowing the "seed of the kingdom" or the "seed of evil." Which is it?

"A City Which Hath Foundations. . ."

Continued From Page 1

noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

In light of this, we would do well to build our lives on that which is secure. The life that God offers is described as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Hebrews 6:19). May we ever travel the strait and narrow of God's way, so that

when we die, we can have the promise of a "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). May we have the assurance of Paul who said, "For we know that if our earthly HOUSE of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Corinthians 5:1).

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

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The Christian And The World



Cecil May, Jr.

through death (John 17:15), we must cope with the temptations, tribulations and trials that living in the world brings.

Called "out of the world" (John 17:6). Jesus'

"In the world" (John 17:11). We are born into the world and must live in it until we die. We must have air to breathe, water to drink and food to eat. Christians have the same physical, emotional and social needs as do all others who live in this world. Until we go "out of the world"

apostles were given to him "out of the world." He has called us to the same kind of separation. We are called by the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:14), called to be saints (Romans 1:7), called out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9), called to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3), called not to uncleanness but to holiness (I Thessalonians 4:7). We are, therefore, to walk worthy of the calling with which we are called (Ephesians 4:1). "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Corinthians 6:17).

"Not of the world" (John 17:16). Aliens, sojourners and strangers we are. "This world is not my home; I'm just a-passing through." This world's treasures are no our treasures (Matthew 6:19-21). Its course is not our route (Ephesians 2:2); its goals and affections are not ours (Colossians 3:1-2). Our language, our dress, the subjects of our conversations, and both the means and the ends of

our lives, are all different from the world's. We are not of the world because our Savior and Lord is not of the world (John 17:14).

"Sent into the world" (John 17:18). We cannot, however, be hermits or obscurantists. Our stay in this world is temporary but purposeful; we are on a mission. Our mission is the same as our Savior's and Lord's. The world is in darkness; we are to give it light. The world is deeply mired in sin; we are to show it the way of righteousness. The world is trying to hate its way to peace and unity; we are to try to love it out of its hate. The world is lost; we are to make known to it the saving gospel.

--President Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1109 Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Do Good Or Do Wrong

John Gipson

Augustine (354-430) in a sermon to the rich said: "That bread which you keep, belongs to the hungry; that coat which you preserve in your wardrobe, to the naked; those shoes which are rotting in your possession, to the shoeless; that gold which you have hidden in the ground, to the needy. Wherefore, as often as you were able to help others, and refused, so often did you do them wrong."

In the first century those Christians who were able to help the needy did so. Luke tells us, "There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need" (Acts 4:34).

Concern for those in need is one of the hallmarks of Christianity. James reminds us, "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" (James 2:14-16). While James is trying to stress the relationship between faith and works, nevertheless he makes an important point about benevolence. It's one thing to express our sympathy to victims of a hurricane, and another thing to reach out and do something constructive about their condition. What do fair words amount to without good works? You know the answer to that.

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Sharing should come naturally to the Christian. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Earthly goods are given to be used, not to be collected . . . Hoarding is idolatry."

--Little Rock, Arkansas.

No Time For The Pain

Jack Gray

There is a popular commercial that promotes the use of a certain product for those who have no time for the pain. The truth is that our society has an aversion to pain. We do not want to suffer. We do not even want to be inconvenienced very much. This has had an effect upon every area of our lives. It also has had an impact upon our religious activities as well.

1. It has had a serious effect upon the level of our commitment. You have surely heard of the "Christian" who wanted a padded cross, rather than one made of rough wood. How sad it is that when we think of the Christian's cross today we think of it on a chain around the neck rather than as a weight on the back! Yet Jesus said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). This suggests deep commitment. It implies involvement and the position of a sacrificing servant.

Christianity involves suffering. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). A blessing is pronounced upon those who suffer "for righteousness sake" (Matthew 5:10). We are told not to be ashamed when we suffer "as a Christian" (I Peter 4:16). But here is the hard question: where are the suffering Christians today? Where are those who are really sacrificing for Jesus? Most have determined long ago that they have no time for the pain.

2. It influences Christian service. We want to serve; but we don't want to be inconvenienced. We will do certain things when we are "on duty." When they can be done on our terms. But not when we are relaxing. Not at mealtime. Not when we have other plans. Not when it interferes with something we really prefer doing ourselves. That is just asking too much!

How did we ever get the idea that Christianity was supposed to be convenient? That the Lord's plans were supposed to coincide with ours? What led us to the conclusion that what Jesus really wants is for us to attend services when it suits us or to be His bondservants when we feel like it? Where have we allowed any room for the pain?

3. It is mirrored in our conduct. Have you noticed the steady decline in attendance at funerals, especially on the part of younger people? Have you observed the aversion that some have to visiting hospitals or homes of the aged, except when close relatives are involved?

Such activities bring pain. They remind us of our own mortality. They tell us that these things will one day happen to us; and we don't want to be reminded. They bring to our attention the fact that we live in a hurting world, where people are afflicted with incurable diseases; and we want to avoid the pain, so we stay away.

4. It has blighted our evangelistic spirit. It has left little room for the compassion that characterized the life of Jesus. We are only embarrassed by Jesus weeping over Jerusalem or Paul and his burden for souls. We have become too comfortable in our air-conditioned buildings and on our padded pews, so the church has come to look more and more inward, rather than outward to those who are still lost.

Pain is cleansing. It is purifying. It is essential to the development of a Christ-like character. He learned obedience only "by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). We must learn ours the same way. So look about you today. Feel the hurt of others. Reflect the compassion of Jesus; and please have time for the pain.

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 62, Cave City, AR 72521.

What Christ Can Do For A Man

T. Pierce Brown

About sixty years ago, some said I was small for my age. Others thought I was young for my size. Maybe I was both. I remember seeing some pictures of Charles Atlas on the back of some magazine that pictured him as a 98 pound weakling. After he used the barbells, or whatever it was they were advertising, he had muscles all over and was attracting all the girls on the beach. Probably this "before and after" image has been used to sell cereal, shampoo, and a variety of other things. It even impressed me so much that, although I could not afford barbells, I did use an old buggy axle, and eventually reached the point where I could chin myself with one arm.

So, when I looked at men before and after they had been touched by Christ, I was impressed with what Christ can do for a man. When I see Peter in Matthew 14:30, he had a great fear of sinking. Jesus had said, "Come," and Peter started, "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, 'Save me, Lord.'" Many times in home Bible studies, when I invite a person to come to Christ, they reply, "I would like to be a Christian, but I am not strong enough." That is sad, but true. We are all in danger of sinking. The waves are really there, and the wind is really boisterous. And we can not walk on water! Neither could Peter, and he knew it and was afraid of sinking. But that sentence above is not complete. It should read, "Neither could Peter **by himself.**"

But the point is, when Christ finished with Peter many years later, he had been delivered from the fear of sinking, and no doubt realized that he could do many things with the help of Jesus, and in obedience to his commands, that he could not do by himself.

Second, in Matthew 16:21, we find "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." When Peter heard him talk about suffering and dying, he began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord." He did not like the idea of pain and suffering. Jesus taught, in effect, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." He said it far better than that in verse 24, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." As important and painful as self discipline is, this is not what Jesus was here talking about. It was something even more radical and painful. It was self denial. We still have trouble letting that sink in. Even our pronunciation of the phrase contributes to it. We speak of self **denial** instead of **self** denial. So the fear of suffering was very real to Peter, but with the help of Jesus he conquered it.

The third fear from which Christ delivered him is suggested in the story found in Mark 14:55 where he denied Christ. We may call it the fear of sneering. When I served in the Air Force in World War II, I was impressed with the fact that there were some who had the bravery to face the shooting enemy, but not the bravery or moral courage to face the sneering friends. There are boys and girls who have lost their lives because they had a greater fear of a sneer than they had of a speeding car, train or gun. Many have refused to obey the gospel because they knew they would face the sneers of their friends. It is sad when the sneering of friends, is more real than the cheering of angels,

but the basic cause of that is a lack of faith.

There are boys and girls who have lost their lives because they had a greater fear of a sneer than they had of a speeding car, train or gun.

But Peter also overcame that. In Acts 2:4 we find the answer to how he did it as we read, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Being filled with the Spirit involves two things: 1. Being emptied of self and 2. Being possessed, owned or controlled by another whose power and ability is infinitely greater than our own.

The reason why being filled by the Spirit lessens the fear of the sneer (or any other damaging fear) may be explained in this simple language: There is less of self to be hurt or afraid. This is about what Paul meant when he said in Galatians 2:20,

For Our Good

Dave Miller

We humans do not generally regard rules and regulations as positive phenomena. We usually perceive them as infringements upon our freedom -- deliberate attempts to restrict our behavior. Especially in our day, new laws are constantly being generated, many of which reach right into our personal lives and dictate rigid control. Though the authorities tell us these laws are for our good, we remain skeptical and suspicious of their persistent imposition of authority.

When we come to Biblical religion, we may have a tendency to display resentment and a rebellious spirit when faced with spiritual regulations. For example, the Christian must be cautious and thoughtful when making decisions about how to dress (I Timothy 2:9; 4:12); the Christian must refrain from unnecessarily exposing the mind and heart to obscene, vulgar, worldly influences which dominate and permeate the average PG or R-rated movie (Proverbs 4:23; Romans 12:9; I Peter 2:11; Romans 13:14; I Timothy 5:22); the Christian must no fellowship or imply support or approval of false religious groups i.e., denominations (II John 9-11; Ephesians 5:11); the Christian must reject unscriptural worship practices like instrumental music, hand clapping, or humming (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16); the Christian must be devoted to a diligent study of the Scriptures (II Timothy 2:15); the Christian must not develop a lax attitude about church attendance (Hebrews 10:25); the Christian must place limits on the use of his money for pleasure (I Timothy 6:9-16; James 4:3); the Christian must be submissive to both civil and spiritual authorities (Romans 13:1-7; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17). These few examples could be multiplied extensively. We may feel that God is being arbitrary and merely burdening our lives with haphazard, insignificant strictures.

But consider for a moment the truth about God's guidelines for humanity. In the first place, the commands of God are neither "burdensome" (I John 5:3) nor "too hard" (Deuteronomy 30:11). Second-

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." Dead men do not hurt, either from sneers or jeers.

So here we see a man who a few days before had such a fear of the sneer of a little servant girl that he thought, "I cannot speak for my Lord," now having the courage to stand up and say in Acts 4:20, "We cannot **but** speak." That is, "We cannot keep from speaking." One of the reasons listed is "They had been with Jesus" (Acts 2:13).

There are many things Christ can do for a man, but in this lesson it is that he took one who was afraid of sinking, suffering and sneering and gave him the courage to stand, speak and live or die for the Lord. The key to doing that is be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). The way to do that is to know, obey and, as the parallel passage says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16).

--Box 144X, Rt. 2 Wartrace, TN 37183. (615) 454-9042.

ly, the laws of God for humanity are actually very desirable (Psalm 19:10) and tasteful (Psalm 119:103). Thirdly, as the Israelites were engaged in their final encampment on the plains of Moab prior to entrance into the Promised Land, Moses articulated a most important principle: "the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes . . . for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24).

You see, God is not asking us to do anything that's harmful to us! He's not restricting us and exerting His authority in our lives in order to make us unhappy! Quite the opposite! Our compliance with His wishes will make us HAPPY (John 13:17; James 1:25)!! Our obedience will make us RIGHTEOUS (Romans 6:16; I John 3:7)!! Our submission will bring us genuine FRIENDSHIP (John 15:14)!! Our obedience will enable us to be SAVED (Hebrews 5:9)!! Our humble submission will result in our exaltation (James 4:10)!! If we will do God's will, we are WISE (Matthew 24:45-46; 7:24).

Friend, do not balk at the commandments of God -- no matter how difficult they may seem to be in light of your condition. For after all, they are given FOR OUR GOOD.

--Via Waymarks Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedford, Texas.

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

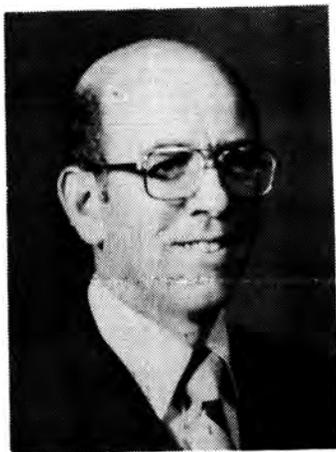
—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1989

NUMBER 48

The Wall Is Open!



Joe E. Galloway

We have viewed the news of the past few weeks with open amazement as East Germany has opened the Berlin Wall to permit unrestricted crossings. To many of us "The Wall" had been viewed as a permanent fixture, symbolizing the tyranny imposed by a totalitarian Communist rule.

Although it is too early to know what the long-term effects may be, we are hopeful that this opening of The Wall expedite the preaching of the gospel to those in (what we have called to this time) "the Iron Curtain countries."

Although it is too early to know what the long-term effects may be, we are hopeful that this opening of The Wall will expedite the preaching of the gospel to those in (what we have called to this time) "the Iron Curtain countries."

As wonderful as the opening of this wall may be to many oppressed peoples today, an even greater barrier was completely removed nearly two thousand years ago that effects all humanity! When Jesus died on the cross, a wall was torn down that had separated man from God since the first sin in Eden. Our sins had separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2). All mankind was effected, for all had sinned (Romans 3:23). Because of our sin there was no way humanly possible for us to get back to God.

Also, as God prepared for the coming of Christ in

order to remove this barrier, a second wall was erected which separated the descendants of Abraham (the Jews) from all the rest of humanity (the Gentiles). This wall of separation was the Old Testament. God gave it to make from Abraham's descendants a nation of people prepared for the coming of his Son, and at the same time to emphasize the sinfulness of sin (Galatians 3:19; Romans 7:12, 13).

Christ's death tore down both walls! Ephesians 2:14-17 says the cross broke down the wall of partition that had separated the Jews and Gentiles by abolishing the "law of commandments." Verses 13 and 18 show that this event "made nigh" to God

those who had been "far off," and that "through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." We have this access to the Father due to Christ having broken down the wall that separated us from God -- our sins which can now be forgiven through Christ's shed blood.

Unlike the opening of the Berlin Wall, we know that the removal of the wall separating us from God is permanent. Yet, like the opening of the wall in Berlin, its opening benefits only those who choose to cross over. We now "have access" to the Father, but must obey the gospel to be again united with him. Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). --218 Pincrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

Meet An Old Lady

Author Unknown

You're going to meet an old lady someday! Down the road ahead, ten, twenty, thirty years, waiting there for you. You will be catching up with her! What kind of an old lady are you going to meet? That's a rather significant question!

She may be seasoned, softened, a gracious lady. A lady who has grown old gracefully, surrounded by hosts of friends. Friends who call her blessed because of what her life has meant to them.

She may be bitter, disillusioned, dried-up, a cynical old buzzard, without a kind word for anyone or anything, soured, friendless, alone.

The kind of old lady you meet will depend entirely on you, because she will be you! She will be the composite of everything you do, say, and think today and tomorrow. Her mind will be set in a mold you have made! Her heart will be turning out what you've been putting in.

Every little thought, every deed goes into this old lady. She will be exactly what you make her, nothing more, nothing less. It is up to you. You will have no one else to credit or blame!

Every day in every way you are becoming more and more like yourself. Amazing, but true! You are getting to look more like yourself, think more like yourself, talk more like yourself. You are becoming you!

Live only in terms of what you are getting out of life and the old lady gets smaller, drier, harder,

crabbier, more self-centered. Open your life to others, think in terms of what you can give, your contribution to life, and the old lady grows larger, softer, kinder, greater.

The point to remember is that these things don't always tell immediately. But they will show up sooner than you think. These little things, seemingly so unimportant now -- attitudes, goals, ambitions, desires -- are adding up inside, where you can't see them, crystalizing in your heart and mind. Someday they will harden into that old lady, nothing will be able to soften them or change them then.

The time to take care of that old lady is right now, today! Examine your motives, attitudes, goals. Check on her. Work her over now while she is still plastic, still in a formative condition. The day is swiftly coming when it is too late! The hardness sets in, worse than paralysis. Character crystalizes, sets, jells. That's the finish!

Any wise business woman takes an inventory regularly. Her merchandise isn't half as important as she is. Better take a bit of personal inventory, too. Then you will be much more likely to meet a lovely, gracious old lady at the proper time.

"Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man (woman) sows, that he (she) shall also reap." Galatians 6:7.

Words Of Truth



(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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David Wade . . . Editor
1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Sacrificing Children

Phil Roberts

In Ezekiel 16:20, the Lord accused the Israelites of having sacrificed their children to idols. This is only one of the many references to this abominable practice recorded in the Old Testament. And almost without exception, whenever one of these references is read in a Bible class, some mother will exclaim that she just cannot see how any mother could do such a thing to her children.

Surely, we all imagine to ourselves that they must have been the worst sort of barbarians to do such!

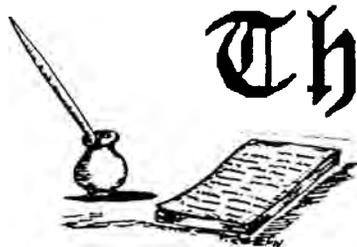
How blind we are. For all our pious lamentations, I seriously doubt there has ever been a nation of people who sacrificed more children to their idols than the people of America today.

I seriously doubt there has ever been a nation of people who sacrificed more children to their idols than the people of America today.

And, I do not speak just of "Un-Christian" America. In the Lord's church I have seen mothers and fathers who recoil in horror at the mention of the human sacrifices practiced by the Israelites, while at the same time they allow their own children to run straight to every altar Satan has erected in our land. Some even push them down the road faster.

Parents who encourage their children to seek popularity through immodest dress and dancing; parents who by their examples teach their children to drink, lie, curse, and break the law; parents who fail to love and discipline their children; parents who give their children everything they want; parents who are too wrapped up in their own lives even to teach their children the Bible and take

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Discovery - A Monthly Paper On Bible And Science For Kids



David Wade

Through this publication they have been able to deal at the adult level with the major issues which confront Christians in matters relating to evidences and apologetics.

In a recent letter, Brad Bromling states, "For as long as we can remember, our children have had to "do without" in this area. There have been either few, or no, materials available. Yet our children are saturated with misinformation practically every day of their lives via television, schools, newspapers, books, magazines, and even peer pressure. We at Apologetics Press feel that it is time to change this situation."

Our Children - Our Future



Dalton Key

share our Lord's love for children. Legion are those who view them as liabilities, as hindrances, as nuisances. A recent issue of U.S. News and World Report contains a quotation from Samuel A. Nigro which speaks clearly to our present distress. He says, "What is done to children is an outrage. They are aborted, deprived of real mothers, savaged with electronic babysitters, filled with violence and disgust, surfeited with active and passive pornography. We institutionalize their abuse and educate

Perhaps many of you are aware of the good work of brethren Bert Thompson, Wayne Jackson, Brad Bromling and others of Apologetics Press which is based in Montgomery, Alabama. Since January 1981 they have been publishing **Reason and Revelation**, a monthly journal on Christian evidences.

"Effective January 1, 1990 we will begin publishing **Discovery**, a monthly journal on Christian evidences for kids. The paper will be six pages in length, with large type styles and headings, beautiful illustrations, and fun activities to reinforce the teaching of the feature articles. The journal will be printed inside and out in two colors, with the color scheme being varied from month to month. All in all, we believe the journal will fascinate children. But more than that, it will teach them through articles written on their own level -- articles which are sound both Biblically and scientifically."

His letters also states that, "Each issue will contain faith-building articles on science and the Bible, and fun activities to reinforce the truths presented."

I have already subscribed for my children and want to urge you to do the same. I have confidence in these brethren to help use in the awesome task of battling for the minds of our children in order to save them from atheism and infidelity. Suggestion: It would be good for churches to consider sending complimentary subscriptions into the homes of the families with school age children. Bulk rates are also available upon request.

The cost of **Discovery** is \$8.00 a year. Send to Apologetics Press, Inc., 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117-2752. For credit card orders, call toll free 1-800-234-8558.

them into spiritless sociopaths - all for the grandiose gratification of pompous adults and their arrogant misunderstanding of 'rights' that are massively bereft of truth, love, and thought."

Our children hold in their hands the keys of the future and a brighter tomorrow. We should not -- we must not -- neglect our stewardship of bringing them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Daniel Webster once said, "If we work upon the sand, it will perish; if we work upon marble, time will efface it; if we rear great temples, they will crumble into the dust; but if we work on immortal minds, if we imbue these minds with principles and a just fear of God, we engrave upon those tablets that which will brighten all eternity."

Answer honestly. Would you be willing to take your child's place, if it meant having you for a parent?

--Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Would you be willing to take your child's place, if it meant having you for a parent?

"What Kind Of Dad Are You?"

Dick Marcear

In Germany, a young Jewish boy had great love and admiration for his father. He eagerly followed as his dad centered their life around his Jewish faith. The family was zealous in their attendance of the services at the Synagogue. And, as Jewish tradition demanded, the boy was schooled by the Rabbis and his parents in the tradition of their faith.

But while a teenager the family moved to another German city. In this new city the leading business men were Lutherans. It was a shock to all when the dad announced they were giving up their Jewish faith and joining the Lutherans. "Why, dad?" the teenager asked. The father said it was to help his business. The boy was upset and confused. This soon gave away to feelings of intense bitterness

that were to stay with him all his life.

In time the boy left Germany for England. Daily he studied at the British Museum thinking and writing a book. He described religion as an "opiate for the masses" and said it could all be explained in terms of economics. Today, Karl Marx's philosophy has spread all over the world. His father's hypocrisy had made a deep impression on this brilliant young Jew.

What kind of dad are you? Is your path one that is straight and easy to follow? Or, is it one marked with hypocrisy and deceit? Or, is it one where you have tried to follow the Lord with all your heart? Granted, you have made mistakes, stumbled, and sometimes fallen. But have you had the courage to

Is your path one that is straight and easy to follow? Or, is it one marked with hypocrisy and deceit?

get up and try again?

The kind of dad you are will have a great influence on your children. So the Scriptures say, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

--Via Old Paths Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Tom Kelton

In my years of preaching as I have watched the parade of people through various congregations, I wonder why so many do not commit themselves to a local body of Christians in a significant way. Many sit and soak and do little else and they flee at the first sign of trouble. They fail to become involved or to give. They criticize all that is wrong with the local congregation.

Underneath this restlessness lies a root of non-commitment uncharacteristic of the early church.

The American passion for excitement has invaded the church. A generation raised on thrilling movies, dynamic television programs, and professional sports becomes bored with an "ordinary" congregation. The demand for entertainment, exciting programs and preaching is far removed from those small bands of early Christians who sacrificed so much to gather to worship on the first day of the week and live for Christ during the week.

Today, there is a sickness in the church that might be called "the fickleness of the floaters." These are the people who go where the action is or where the problems aren't. They back out when the preacher preaches the truth or the elders stand against sin. They live on the fringes, hurling criticism when difficulties arise.

Today, there is a sickness in the church that might be called "the fickleness of the floaters."

Sacrificing Children

Continued From Page 2

them to worship God - in what respect do they differ from the Israelite parents who sacrificed their children to idols?

We sacrifice them to the gods of our jobs, television, materialism, and social popularity, and then have the gall to be appalled at the practice of the Israelites. Lord, forgive us, and help us to see our folly before it is too late -- before judgment comes on us, too.

--Via Old Paths, Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Floater

We need to accept the challenge of committing ourselves to responsible membership in the local congregation. Our attitude must be that God will use it, and use us in its midst.

We need to be a part of a local congregation, not bystanders. We need to be there and not forsake the assembling of the saints (Hebrews 10:25).

When we criticize the local congregation, we crit-

icize ourselves. The one who has the right to criticize is the one who works. Be loyal to the preacher and elders. If they are wrong, go to them directly. Do not sow seeds of discontent or become a trouble maker. Don't be a floater. Don't run when trouble and difficulties develop. Be part of the solution.

--Box 152, Pharr, Texas 78577.

"Is It Well?"



Winfred Clark

This question is addressed to the Shunemite lady when she arrived at Carmel. This was a question of Elisha as he had seen her coming. "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband, is it well with the child?" II Kings 4:26. You can see that these are questions of concern and they center in some very important things.

These are questions that focus on the home and the relationships that are found in the home. We will do well to look carefully at some implications of such.

I. Is It Well With Us As A Person?

Remember that how we do as individuals in the home will have to do with how the home will do. If we are individuals are not right in our relationship with God and ourselves we will find it hard to be right with others. So things must be right with us. When this is the case it will not be hard to be right with others.

II. Is It Well With Us As Partners?

When she is asked about the husband, she is asked about another party in this relationship. Such cannot be taken for granted. Everybody will know that it takes a great deal of work to make a success or a partnership. This is no less true in the marriage relationship. It means that both the husband and wife must put forth the proper amount of work. It is the "twain" that becomes one flesh

(Matthew 19:5-6).

III. Is It Well With Us As Parents?

There is no reluctance on the part of the prophet to ask about the child. After all, there is a parental responsibility for the children. Whether or not the children do well will depend in large measure on what the parents may do. Surely the parents will want to give the children every advantage.

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

West Alabama
SING-A-LONG
Friday, December 1, 1989
7 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Sherer Auditorium,
Downtown Jasper
Congregational Singing
No Collections Taken
Everyone
Invited!

Enthusiasm Makes The Difference Between Success And Failure



Edsel Burleson

The great historian Arnold Toynbee once said: "Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first, an ideal that takes the imagination by storm; second, a definite, intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into practice."

Enthusiasm is essential to the promotion of the cause of Christ and must be seen in the life of every member of the church if the church is to grow. Christians prove their faith and their love for the Lord by thrusting themselves wholeheartedly into his service. John tells us of the Lord's displeasure at the lack of enthusiasm with some first century Christians. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). ". . . I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Revelation 3:1, 2). Paul wrote to Titus that Jesus ". . . gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

There is no substitute for enthusiasm. Enthusiasm makes all the difference in success and failure. Only by steady and continuous enthusiasm can we accomplish what the Master expects. We may as well think that a kettle will boil without fire under it as to expect anything really worthwhile in the Lord's work without enthusiasm. Enthusiasm begets energy. It is a contagious thing. It is expansive. It was a significant characteristic of Christ, his apostles, and the early church.

Enthusiasm makes all the difference between happy, joyous, service, and the drudgery of being compelled to work. Enthusiasm makes all the difference between success and failure.

Norvel Young once wrote: "Did you ever watch a blacksmith as he stirred up his fire? Each time he wanted to change the shape of a horseshoe or some other piece of metal, he would have to pump the bellows and poke the coals until the fires that had nearly gone out were blazing again. The metal would not yield to his will until the fires in his forge were stirred to a white heat. We may know a great deal of Bible and be morally good but we need someone to 'pump the bellows and stir up the coals' so we may talk enthusiastically about the kingdom of God."

Someone selected these quotes about ENTHUSIASM.

The cross is easier to the Christian who takes it up, than to the one who drags it along!

Enthusiasm is contagious - and so is a lack of it!

He who has no fire in himself, can not warm others!

We won't go far without enthusiasm, but neither will we go far if that is all we have!

Years wrinkle the skin, but lack of enthusiasm wrinkles the soul!

There's always a good crop of food for thought. What we need is enough enthusiasm to harvest it!

Let us get excited and stirred up about Christiani-

ty to the extent that we will become more active, enthusiastic "doers of the word," rather than just inactive spectators.

--Via West End News, 420 7th Street S.W., Birmingham, AL 35211.

Teenagers Buried In Unmarked Graves

J. R. Chism

In our major cities of America, according to Newsweek April/88, more than a million teenagers try to survive a dangerous existence. When they are seen by passersby, many wonder why these teenagers do not return home to their parents. Executive director, Jed Everson, of San Francisco's Larkin Street Youth Center says, "What they do not know is that in 68% of our calls to parents of children who would consider going home, the response is, 'You keep the kid!'" Many of them are lured into prostitution within 48 hours of running away from home. Life is dangerous for all of them with more than 5,000 being buried in unmarked graves each year.

Other sources tell us that many teenage runaways

turn to crime to try and support themselves, and a large number of these become both users and pushers of illegal drugs, all to survive on their own.

It may be later than we think! Parents, it's 1989 ... Do you know where your children are? Are they growing spiritually? Are they in a position to face a hostile climate in a rather cold and insensitive world? Family devotionals, Bible classes, regular worship and association with other Christians can help prepare them for adult life. That's what it is all about . . . Paul put it like this, "*Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" (Galatians 6:2). It's though enough to make it with the help of each other. It's almost impossible without it.

--Via Old Paths, Box 563, Liberal, KS 67901.

Hit By A Drunk

Ronnie Missildine

We were on our way to the youth devotional about 6:45 last Monday night, October 13th. We were in the station wagon which was loaded with teenagers; there were nine of us in all. I was driving down the street about 25 or 30 m.p.h., when suddenly I caught a glimpse of something in my rearview mirror. When I glanced up there, he was coming up on us extremely fast; so fast, in fact, I didn't have time to yell, accelerate, or anything. In a split second he crashed into us in the rear. My Shannon, Angela Kline, and Nikki Johnson were sitting in the far back seat where he hit us. Shannon's leg was (is) broken, but Angela and Nikki were unhurt except for some bruises. All of the rest of us were badly shaken up, especially Sandra. My car was smashed.

After I was sure there were no life-threatening injuries among us, I went to see about him. He was staggering around in the street and reeked of alcohol. He didn't even know what had happened! He never slowed down before he hit us. He never applied his brakes. The trooper on the scene estimated his speed as being between 75 and 85 m.p.h. when he hit us. In fact, he never even saw us. He reported to his insurance company that he has no recollection of the accident. He admitted to the trooper that he'd had 12 beers just prior to his getting into his car, and in his front seat sat two tall cans of Coors Light. I was so angry! We all could have easily been killed, especially the little girls in the back seat. The fact that sore bodies and a bro-

ken leg was all that happened to us was by the providence of God.

Why people continue to use alcohol in any quantity, I'll never know. And, why people who call themselves Christians think that they can play with it, drink a little, social drink, get just a little drunk is beyond my comprehension! It is indeed A DEADLY EVIL!

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WPYK A.M. 1010
7:00-7:30 a.m.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1989

NUMBER 49

Why All The Fuss Over Genesis?



Brad T. Bromling

Genesis has been at the heart of the heated debate between evolutionary science and Christianity for a long time. Of the sixty-six books of the Bible, none has received the same degree of malicious abuse as has Genesis. The smug dismissal of the book as religious nonsense by many secular writers, and the claim of liberal theologians that the book is a collection of myths and legends, compels Christians to continually defend the authenticity of Genesis. But, is such a defense sensible? Is it really that important? To some, it may seem a trivial matter. They may wonder if a book from the Old Testament (which was nailed to Jesus' cross [Colossians 2:14]) warrants a defense at all. Hence, this article will consider the question: "Why all the fuss over Genesis?"

Inspired

Genesis is worthy of defense for several reasons. First, it is an inspired book. Paul's affirmation that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" is as true of the Old Testament (including Genesis) as it is of the New Testament. Peter gives a clue as to how inspiration worked: "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21). In fact, the Greek word translated "inspiration" (*theopneustos*; II Timothy 3:16) literally means "God-breathed." Jesus quoted confidently from the Genesis record, thereby placing His unequivocal stamp of approval upon it. When one remembers that Jesus is the Creator (Colossians 1:16), and that He quoted from Genesis (e.g., Matthew 19:4), can there be any question as to whether or not the account is anything less than historically accurate and

inspired? If anyone is qualified to set mankind straight on the accuracy of Genesis, it is the Lord. Before a person succumbs to the intimidation of "science falsely so-called" and gives up one inspired book (such as Genesis), he must realize that the same reasoning will lead ultimately to the abandonment of every other inspired book.

Accurate

Second, Genesis is worthy of defense because of its absolute accuracy. It is historically, topographically, geographically, scientifically, and anthropologically correct. Although Genesis covers approximately 2,500 years of human experience, it is internally consistent and completely harmonious with true secular history. Every verifiable topographical reference has been found to be precisely correct. J. W. McGarvey, noted Bible scholar, meticulously measured the Bible lands and carefully compared his results with the Sacred Volume. His conclusion was that every reference to cities, nations, distances, and elevations is accurate to the most minute detail. As a book written by a writer reared in the royal family of Egypt, Genesis reflects ancient Egyptian culture while avoiding the superstitions and erroneous concepts of that nation.

Although it was written in a "prescientific" age, Genesis is free of the errors of prescientific man. The book does not contain a single contradiction with itself or the rest of Holy Writ.

Although it was written in a "prescientific" age, Genesis is free of the errors of prescientific man. The book does not contain a single contradiction with itself or the rest of Holy Writ.

Foundational

Third, Genesis is worthy of defense because it provides the historical foundation for various New Testament teachings. Consider these few examples: (1) Man's position relative to woman is based upon the order of their creation and fall: "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (I Timothy 2:12-14). Paul's argument is impotent without Genesis. (2) The doctrine of monogamy is founded upon Moses' record of the events following the creation of Eve: "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?" (cf. Matthew 19:4, 5; Genesis 2:24). (3) Jesus and Peter based arguments for watchfulness and godly living upon the reality of the Flood (Matthew 24:36-44; I Peter 3:20, 21). If this flood did not occur in the manner and to the extent described in Genesis these arguments are pointless and hollow.

Explanatory

Fourth, Genesis is worthy of defense because of the explanatory power that it possesses. So many of the truly basic questions asked by man throughout history are answered logically and cogently by Genesis. From the account of Creation man learns the *how* and *when* of origins. From the account of the Curse man learns the reason for the imperfections in the physical realm, as well as the origin of immorality and human suffering. From the account of the Flood man learns the reason for the geophysical imperfections of his world, and the cause of the many fossil graveyards that perplex and intrigue him. From the account of the Tower of Babel man learns the source of the language barrier that divides him into his various

Continued On Page 3

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

"They Made Light Of It"



David Wade

went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them" (Matthew 22:5, 6). Obviously, he was portraying God's people, the Jews, as they rejected Jesus and refused to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, "But they made light of it and went their ways," that is, they paid no attention to it, and did not regard the invitation of any value. The Jews had a long standing tradition of weighing God's laws and determining the importance of each commandment. The scribe of Mark 12:18 acknowledged "the first commandment of all" was to "love the Lord your God . . ." They considered

In the parable of the wedding feast Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a King who arranged a marriage feast for his son. His servants went out to urge those invited to "come to the wedding" (Matthew 22:4). The expected response was not evident. "But they made light of it and

this as the heaviest, most important law. They considered the lightest law to be, "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days" (Deuteronomy 22:6-7).

Furthermore, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for making God's laws heavy for others while making them light on themselves. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men" (Matthew 23:2-5).

If we are not careful, we can fall into the rut of mishandling God's word as did the scribes and Pharisees. We must recognize that all of God's word is heavy. We must rightly divide it, and we must never disregard it, any of it! What applies to others, equally applies to us. We should be willing and prepared to live by the same admonitions and commandments that apply to everyone else.

Things That Never Change



Weldon Langfield

the moral views which formed the backdrop of the Constitution itself have been swept aside by millions of our countrymen. In this world of constant variation, it is refreshing to remember that God had provided some things that are enduring.

We have an unchanging savior. We are assured that "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Unfortunately, some have attempted to rob that great passage of its beauty by using it as a "proof text" for present-day miraculous gifts. The sameness of Jesus, however, doesn't compel us to believe that he today is raising the dead any more than it forces us to believe he is still spontaneously creating worlds or humans as in the beginning (John 1:3). The Bible here simply states that Christ doesn't change in his dealings with man, his character or his purpose. He will always be like the forgiving father in the parable of the prodigal son. He will always be like the master in the parable of the talents. Jesus will always possess the character that made him willing to die for his friends. In our

Tennyson wrote, "Let the world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change." Daily experience reminds us of the truth of these words. In the last thirty years, the American economy has peaked and declined, the global influence of our nation has changed, and the

What Are You Putting In?



Dalton Key

The preacher was right. We get out of worship about what we put in. If we attend church services for no reason other than habit or a sense of grudging duty; if we refuse to participate in singing and praying from the heart; if we choose a short nap over spiritual instruction - yes, if we merely "show up" to "warm a pew," we should expect to leave the building with nothing by way of Christian enrichment. After all, we put nothing in! It is possible to attend the service and entirely miss the worship!

But one thing more. What is the primary purpose behind worship? Isn't it the praise and adoration of

One man hurried from the worship services complaining to the preacher that he had gotten nothing out of the worship. The preacher remarked that the man would have gotten more OUT if he had put more IN.

Almighty God? Isn't "worship" inherently "worship," in which we, as creatures, declare the worth and glory of the Creator? If this is true, our emphasis should not be directed at self, but as God. We assemble to worship, not ourselves, not the preacher, not the song leader, but the God of heaven.

Jesus taught, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10). And again, "God is a Spirit; and they that

We assemble to worship, not ourselves, not the preacher, not the song leader, but the God of heaven.

worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

The question is not "what am I getting out of worship," but "what am I putting into worship." But it is true, nonetheless -- we get out about what we put in.

About The Father's Business

Author Unknown

The Lord has given to every man his work. It is his business to do it, and the Devil's business to hinder him -- if he can. So sure as God gives a man a work to do, Satan will try to hinder him. He may present other things more promising; he may allure you by worldly prospect; he may assault you with slander, torment you with false accusations, set you to work defending your character, employ pious persons to lie about you, editors to assail you, and excellent men to slander you. You may have Pilate and Herod, Ananias and Caiaphas all combined against you, and Judas standing by to sell you for 30 pieces of silver. And you may wonder why all these things have come to pass. Can you not see that the whole thing is brought about through the craft of the Devil, to draw you off from your work and hinder your obedience to God?

Keep about your work. Do not flinch because the lion roars. Do not stop to stone the Devil's dogs. Do not fool around your time chasing the Devil's rabbits. Do your work; let liars lie; let sectarians quarrel; let editors publish; let the Devil do his

worst. But see to it that nothing hinders you from fulfilling the work God has given you. He has not sent you to make money; he has not commanded you to get rich. He has never bidden you to defend your character nor has he bidden you to contradict falsehoods about yourself which Satan and his servants may start to peddle. If you do these things you will do nothing else; you will be at work for yourself and not for the Lord.

Keep about your work. Let your aim be as steady as a star. Let the world brawl and bubble. You

may be assaulted, wrangled, insulted, slandered, wounded, and rejected. You may be chased by foes, abused by them, forsaken by friends, despised and rejected of men, but see to it that with steadfast determination and with unfaltering zeal you pursue that great purpose of your life and the object of your being until at last you can say: "I have finished the work which you, dear God, have given me to do!"

--Written about 80 years ago.

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Things That Never Change

Continued From Page 2

darkest moments we can absolutely depend on the constancy of Christ.

We have an unshakeable kingdom. The writer of Hebrews spoke of it as "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Hebrews 12:28). The kingdom does not change because it is founded upon the unchanging gospel, "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). That word is compared to a seed in Holy Writ (Luke 8:11). A grain of wheat, when planted, will yield wheat every time and anywhere it germinates. Likewise, when the seed of the word is planted in the hearts and minds of men, it will always yield pure New Testament Christianity.

During his earthly ministry, Christ predicted that the kingdom would come within nearly all of his apostles' lifetimes. He said, "There be some . . . who shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1).

The kingdom, or church, came with the power of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost following Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:1-4; 47). Paul later revealed that all Christians have been "translated. . . into the kingdom" (Colossians 1:13). The unchangeable nature of this domain can be seen in that even today, when the people of the church of Christ are willing to remain "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15), the kingdom can be identified in any community.

We have an immutable law. The "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25) will remain in its present form until the end of the world. The most brilliant minds in human history have rallied themselves against the gospel: men like Paine, Hume, and Russell. They're dead, but God's word lives on. The mighty Roman empire marshalled its considerable power against the truth. Today, the

ruins of that once-grand dominion serve only as tourist attractions, yet God's word endures in the hearts and minds of millions. While Rome's marble columns continue to decay, the Bible remains the perennial best seller world-wide. Jesus predicted with pinpoint accuracy, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Therefore, we should remain steadfast. Paul commanded the only reasonable response to the unchanging spiritual realm around us when he declared in I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

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Why All The Fuss Over Genesis?

Continued From Page 1

cultural communities. Genesis provides the divine answer to such universal questions as: how old is the universe, from where did man come and how long has he been here, what makes man different from animals, what is the proper relationship that should exist between the sexes, what is sin and how did it enter the world, and why does not all mankind speak the same language? This is just a small sampling of the myriads of questions that man would be forced to ask and never be competent to answer were it not for Genesis.

Evolutionists make a pitiful attempt to answer these questions but continue to inanely stumble on such simple dilemmas as: "Which came first - the chicken or the egg?"

Conclusion

As long as some men reject the divine explanation for the origin of the universe, there will be opponents of Genesis. Yet, this grand book is worthy of defense because it is inspired, accurate, foundational in nature, and possesses significant explanatory power. Bible believing

people must not be intimidated into compromise. C. H. Mackintosh has suitably stated: "Geologists may explore the bowels of the earth, and draw from thence materials from which to add to, and, in some instances to contradict the divine record. They may speculate upon the fossil remains; but the disciple hangs, with sacred delight, over the page of inspiration. He reads, believes, and worships."

Can We Understand The Holy Bible Alike?



W. A. Holley

For centuries the Bible has been vilified by those who teach that it cannot be understood by all alike. These teachers talk of private interpretations as if each person is entitled to his own notions even though they may contradict what the Bible says.

Those who turn to I Peter 1:20-21, in their efforts to justify "private interpretations," have turned to the wrong passage! The passage says, "Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In plain language, what this reference teaches is, that what the prophets spake and wrote was not their own "private interpretation." Their message was the message of the Holy Spirit (II Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16).

Can we understand the Bible alike? Yes, of course, we can! We understand every thing else alike. For example, 2 plus 2 equals four; 36 inches equals one yard, 16 ounces equals one pound, 5280 feet equals one mile. On any mathematical examination all who come up with different answers, fail! Every school child must submit the same answers.

Can we understand the Bible alike? Yes, indeed! In Ephesians 3:3-4, we have an important point made: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery: (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.) Notice these four important words: Revelation, wrote, read, and understand. Later Paul wrote: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

We may differ and all misunderstand what the Bible teaches. One person may understand while another may misunderstand; but if all understand the Bible they all understand it alike.

What causes misunderstanding? One may misunderstand by not taking all that God says on the subject (Matthew 4:4). Again, we may misunderstand God's word by going beyond what is written (Deuteronomy 29:29; I Corinthians 4:6, ASV). Human opinion counts for nothing (Jude 3). We may also misunderstand by not knowing what God's word says (John 8:30-32; 17:17). Hence, we must study the Holy Bible (II Timothy 2:15). Then, we may misunderstand the teaching of the Bible by adding to or subtracting from God's holy word (Revelation 22:18-19). Again, we may misunderstand the word of God by simply choosing to ignore it (II John 9-11).

To understand the Bible we must agree on what it teaches. For example, we can understand that one

must believe in order to be saved (Acts 16:30-32), but when one adds "faith only" doctrine, disagreement arises (James 2:14-26). We can agree that faith comes from hearing God's word (Romans 10:17), but if one teaches that saving faith comes through prayer, then disagreement jumps to the forefront. Bible believers can agree that one must repent or perish (Luke 13:3), but disagreement arise when one contends that repentance is unnecessary (Jonah 3:10; Matthew 12:41).

We can all agree that one must confess Christ before he is baptized. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37). Confessing one's feelings, or telling one's experiences would make agreement on the teaching of the Bible impossible. Scripture, please!!

The Bible teaches that baptism is a burial in water (Acts 10:47-48; John 3:3, 5). Those who insist on sprinkling or pouring as a substitute for immersion make agreement with them impossible (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Why reject God's word for the words of men? (Mark 7:6-13). Yes, we can agree that baptism in the name of Christ is for, unto, or in order to obtain, remission of sins (Acts 2:38), but those who follow strictly the Bible can never accept "baptism because of remission of sins." Where is the verse that teaches that one should be baptized because he is already saved?

We understand the Bible when we accept the fact that the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). But when some insist on joining the church of one's choice, we can never agree to such human practices.

The addition of human creeds, articles of faith, manuals, and catechisms creates religious divisions which can never be breached until all such religious creeds are forever abandoned (Revelation 22:18-19). The Bible is all sufficient (II Timothy 3:15-17). Creeds do not unite people; rather, they create division (I Corinthians 1:10; John 17:20-23). To have unity, be prepared to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:1-5).

To have unity, where worship is concerned, we must follow the Lord's will and way (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19). The addition of organs and pianos and brass bands creates division and disharmony. The Lord did not command playing, but singing (Colossians 3:16). The addition of mechanical instruments to the worship creates discord, strife, conflict, contention (Proverbs 6:16-19).

We must be united in the use of Bible names or division and strife will follow inevitably. Speaking as the oracles of God brings peace and harmony (I Peter 4:11). Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names. Wearing human religious names always divide people (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16).

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580.

What Shall We Say Then?



Winfred Clark

That which forms the caption for this article is taken from Romans 4:1. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" If you will move down to verse 3 you will note another question is being asked. That question is, "For what saith the scripture?" So

what are we to say about Abraham or any other Bible topic? Aren't we limited to what the scriptures have to say? Isn't this implied by Paul?

Suppose some were to say something of Abraham that the scriptures did not say. What attitude should we take towards such? Suppose the scripture said one thing and we said another, what then? Which statement should we support? You would say, "support what the scriptures have to say about Abraham." But why would a person need to support such? You would respond by saying, "because the scriptures always present the truth."

Yes, you would be absolutely right in the matter. Such deserves our support.

Go beyond this principle and consider another Bible subject. Suppose we are talking about the subject of baptism. Now I know, and you know, what the scripture has to say about baptism. It plainly shows one is saved by being baptized. That is what Jesus has to say about it. Notice, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). There can be no doubt that the Lord placed two conditions in the passage before salvation. That is clear for all of us to see. That is what the scripture says. Now, what can I say of the subject of baptism as it relates to salvation? Am I limited in what I can say? Am I limited to what the Bible has to say? Am I not just as limited in this case as I would be in what I could say about Abraham? Wouldn't I be limited to what the scriptures had to say?

Could I say one is saved without being baptized and have the endorsement of the scriptures? How could I when the scriptures did not say it?

--Via Hobbs Street Herald, P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the
Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

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The Tree Of Knowledge

THE Bible has in it 3,566,480 letters, 810,677 words, 1189 chapters and 66 Books. The longest chapter is the 119th Psalm. The shortest and middle chapter is the 117th Psalm. The middle verse is the 8th verse of the 118th Psalm. The longest name is in the 8th chapter of Isaiah verse 1, and contains 18 letters. The word "and" occurs 46,627 times; the word "Lord" 1,855 times. The 37th chapter of Isaiah and the 19th chapter of II Kings are alike. The longest verse is Esther 8:9; the shortest verse is John 11:35. In Ezra 7:21 are all the letters of the alphabet except the letter J. The finest piece of reading is Acts 26th chapter. The name of God is not found in Esther. The Bible contains knowledge, wisdom, the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of the sinner, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy; its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. It contains light to guide you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. God was 2,500 years getting ready to write the Bible; 1,600 years writing it; and has been 1900 years fulfilling it. The word "boy" occurs in the Bible three times and the word "girl" two times. Christ is the key to the entire book. Forty men were employed in its making. It was written by doctors, farmers, fishers, kings, shepherds, old, young, rich, poor, learned and unlearned. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass and the soldier's sword. Do not neglect your Bible. It is a mine of wealth and health to the soul and a river of pleasure. It is given to you in this life and will be opened to you at the judgment and it is established forever. If you want a crown of rejoicing when Jesus returns to raise the dead, read your Bible and lead
lost souls
TO
CHRIST.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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David Wade . . . Editor

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Was Mary Stigmatized With Immorality?



David Wade

shown on NBC in December 1979, and has been aired a few times since.

Similar assumptions are made by a brother who writes, "To have a child out of wedlock would be heartbreaking . . . but to have them claim God as Father would be too much! It took an angel to keep Joseph from divorcing her! Is there a lesson that things were not all that good at home? In John 8:41 the critics hit Jesus with "we are not a child of fornication." Nazareth was a small town with small-town gossip. Mary was stigmatized with immorality when she carried the Son of God! There was the desperation flight to Egypt. A hard trip without job or funds. Jesus really upset the tranquility of their "newly-wed home." They were still afraid to return to Bethlehem, so they went back to "face the music" at Nazareth" (*The Man Who . . . Gospel Teachers Adult Series*, p. 47).

The above scenario is most unlikely for the following reasons: 1) There is no indication in scripture that the people of Nazareth, save Joseph, knew anything about Mary being with child. In the Song of Mary, she prophesied that, "all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). How could her generation call her "blessed" if they perceived her to be a harlot?

2) If Jesus was thought to be the illegitimate son of Joseph and Mary, how could he freely enter the Temple or numerous synagogues to worship God without public rebuke? The Law of Moses would have excluded him. "One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the congregation of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the congregation of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 23:2). On the other hand, at age 12 Jesus entered the Temple along with relatives and acquaintances from Nazareth (Luke 2:41-50). No one from Nazareth forbade him to enter the Temple. Even his discussion with the Pharisees in John 8 appears to have been in the Temple (verse 20). Don't you think his enemies would have loved this "juicy

gossip" in order to bring charges against Jesus for entering the Temple unlawfully? Furthermore, after his temptation in the wilderness, "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as his custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read" (Luke 4:16). Yes, they tried to kill him that day, but it was not because of any question about his right to enter the synagogue. Rather, they were filled with wrath because he claimed to be God's Son fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:18-21; Isaiah 61:1-3).

3) The argument that Jesus' critics accused him of being a "child of fornication" (John 8:41) simply misses the mark. Rather, Jesus is accusing them of having a (spiritual) father other than God. "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father . . . You do the deeds of your father . . . If God were your Father, you would love me . . . You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do" (John 8:38, 41, 42, 44). Jesus' birth is not the matter under discussion in John 8:41. Rather, his enemies are vainly trying to answer Jesus' accusation that they are not the legitimate children of God. They answer, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father - God." Furthermore, Jesus charges "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46).

Having withered under Jesus' devastating logic, his enemies grasp at straws with the accusation, "Do we not rightly say that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (John 8:48). This statement, within itself, shows clearly that these Jews were ignorant of any supposed shame or reproach in the Lord's family.

Obviously, the events surrounding his birth; Mary's visit with Zecharias and Elizabeth, the trip to the Bethlehem stable, the flight to Egypt, the eventual return to Nazareth, etc., not only fulfilled prophecy, but also provided protection for their reputations and their lives.

No, Mary was not stigmatized with immorality when she carried the Son of God. There was no music to face at Nazareth. Jesus was not considered by his contemporaries to be illegitimate.

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The Joy Of Sharing

Bernice Vinsant

We live in one of the most prosperous countries in the world. God has blessed us with every material thing the human mind can comprehend; but still we are clamoring for more. The word "benevolence" is almost unheard of and certainly the least used in any nation. We read or hear daily of our fellow man's plight to have enough money to feed his family and himself. Children are starving by the hundreds and elderly people are passing from this life daily from starvation. What are we doing with our time, our talents, and our money?

We have forgotten the joy of sharing, what we learned from our mother's knee when we were small. We want to be known as the most God fearing and believing nation on earth, but what is wrong? We are self-centered, proud, haughty, spiteful, and above all, selfish. We study our Bibles daily. We know what the scriptures say on giving. Do we think that God doesn't mean what He says on giving? Let us examine ourselves and see where we have fallen short on our duties as Christian people. Let us consider the joy of sharing. We are commanded to give and give freely. Do we share that way?

When we visit the nursing home and help bring joy to the elderly men, women, and yes even children, we are sharing ourselves. We can read the Bible for them pray with them, send cards for them and make them comfortable. We are sharing our time and talents with them joyfully.

The hospitals have so many seriously ill people who need our help in their homes. We can help the ones that are there in their homes to cook a meal, make a bed or do laundry. We are sharing ourselves in that home.

In the church of our Lord, we can teach and help with the communion trays - keeping them clean and filled - ready for services. We can greet people

Continued On Page 3

The Unique Birth Of The Savior



Brad T. Bromling

Without a doubt, Jesus Christ stands as history's incomparable figure. What imagination could invent such a man? He endured the suffering of humanity and enjoyed few of its pleasures. He had the power of deity but never used it for selfish ends. His heroism is measured only in

His submission to the Father, and His nobility lay in His moral and ethical purity. He personified love, but was loved by few and hated by most. No one lived, died, or returned from the dead as did He. Neither was any other human born as He was.

The Joy Of Sharing

Continued From Page 2

as they arrive for the services and make them feel at home in our midst. We can help in the nursery.

Sharing oneself is the most joy a Christian can have. There are times when money is needed and we understand that need. So many times we give money because it soothes our conscience and we feel we have done all that is needed.

In the daily study of my Bible, I find that Christ was constantly giving, joyfully, to every one He met. It was not monetary things. He had no money, but He gave of Himself. He gave love, compassion, guidance, and comfort! He raised the dead, healed the lepers, fed the multitudes and visited the sick. He cared so much He went to the cross for our sins. We are not asked to die on a cross but we're expected to carry our cross daily and share all the things we have freely.

The joy of sharing is one of the most wonderful feelings we can experience, because it is ourselves that we are giving, not our husbands, our children, or our neighbors. If we sacrifice that makes our gift so much more valuable. Giving is between us and our God. He knows the inner most part of our hearts and is able to distinguish the motive of the gift giving. Let us give as we receive daily. Twenty four hours a day God's blessings surround us. HE LOVES US SO. He has made preparation for everything we need to sustain us. Do we consider that when we share ourselves and goods with others?

Let us love God and our neighbors enough to share joyfully all the things we have. Christ says "If you give a cup of cold water in my name you are my disciples." This should make our motive even stronger to share with everyone.

Let us start today giving of ourselves first, then of our means, no matter how meager they are. We must not give grudgingly but joyfully and with love from our hearts.

--Wallsboro, Alabama 36092.

It is true that Adam and Eve were miraculously created, that Isaac was a child of promise, and that Josiah was called by name 300 years before his birth. But only Jesus Christ was promised 4,000 years before His birth, predicted and named 700 years before His birth, and miraculously conceived in the womb of a virgin. Truly, there was none like Him.

Incredibly, the truth of Jesus' virgin birth (which is no more unbelievable than the rest of His existence) has been rejected by multitudes who claim to be Christians. Although not going to this extreme, many dilute the Biblical doctrine, while others relegate it to the level of personal option. All three approaches are unacceptable to those who respect the Bible and reverence the Messiah it describes. Because of the perpetual controversy about the virgin birth, a plain, confident statement of this truth is in order.

The Bible teaches the virgin birth of Jesus in three ways. First, God foretold the Savior's advent by the mouth of Isaiah: ". . . the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). This statement predates Christ's birth by 700 years! Some think it necessary to find an application of these words to an event in the life of Isaiah; all such attempts have failed. There has been only one virgin birth; Isaiah spoke of the Lord's virgin birth or he spoke of none. The idea that he spoke of two births (one natural and the other miraculous) is insupportable. Those who propose this theory have suggested that the word "virgin" ought to be translated "young woman," and that Matthew simply altered the words and applied this verse to Jesus. This view deteriorates upon close examination. Recognizing the context of Isaiah 7, how could the normal conception and birth of a child have been a "sign" from God? What significance would Matthew's readers see in his statement that Jesus was born of a virgin as a fulfillment of some verse in Isaiah about an anonymous young woman bearing a child? Critics counter by saying that the "fully messianic" reading of Isaiah 7:14 would make no sense to Isaiah's contemporaries. However, how much sense did most messianic predictions make to their original audiences? What did the predictions of the Lord's passion mean to Isaiah's hearers? What did Joel's predictions of Pentecost really mean to his listeners? This charge is untrue anyway. If, through the eye of prophecy, Isaiah saw the pregnancy of Mary as though she were present with him, he may be understood to have said (in effect) that in the time it will take her child to reach the age of responsibility (a few years) the oppressive forces that troubled Ahaz would be no more. Although the sign was not "seen" by Ahaz, it was seen and described by Isaiah - hence, serving the same purpose.

Further, the translation of the Hebrew word *almah* as "young woman" is incorrect. In none of *almah's* known occurrences does it ever denote a woman who is married or immoral. Finally, when

Matthew quoted Isaiah he used the Greek word for "virgin" (*parthenos*) not "young woman." That settles the matter. He functions as the inspired interpreter of this controversial passage (Matthew 1:22).

Incredibly, the truth of Jesus' virgin birth (which is no more unbelievable than the rest of His existence) has been rejected by multitudes who claim to be Christians.

Second, the Bible teaches the virgin birth of Christ by implication. The fact of Jesus' incarnation implies a means of incarnation. John said: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:13). How did this "Word" (who is deity - John 1:1). become flesh? The only answer available is the virgin birth! Had Jesus been born of solely human parentage, He would have been merely human. Had He not been born of human parentage at all, how would He be human? The Bible plainly teaches that He was both human and divine (Mark 6:3; Philippians 2:5-8; John 5:17, 18 etc.), and the virgin birth is the only explanation of how that could be. Little wonder that Paul wrote: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman . . ." (Galatians 4:4).

Third, the virgin birth is taught as a historical fact by Matthew and Luke who wrote separate accounts of the Lord's life. Neither writer depended on the other for information, and each (guided by the Holy Spirit) narrated the history of Jesus to fill individual purposes and to emphasize different aspects of the Lord's life. Though they differ, these two accounts harmonize perfectly. Matthew discusses the virgin birth as being the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Matthew 1:22), and focuses on Joseph. Throughout his genealogy, Matthew employs the term "begot" to describe father-son kinship, but when he came to Joseph's relationship to Jesus he said: ". . . Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ" (1:16). In this way he indicated Joseph's non-participation in the matter. He also emphasized Mary's virginity: "After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit" (vs 18). This was reiterated in verse 25: "[Joseph] did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son." Matthew thereby removed all doubt regarding Mary's miraculous conception.

Luke discusses the virgin birth as being the fulfillment of Gabriel's prediction (Luke 1:26-38), and places special focus upon Mary. He recounts how that the angel announced to Mary before her conception that she had been chosen to give birth to the Savior. His narrative twice calls her a virgin

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A Good Home Is The Answer



Bobby Key

I have noticed that there is something lacking in the home life of most youngsters who grow up and leave the church. Much of our trouble is parental neglect. The parents are either too careless or too busy with their own pleasures to give sufficient time, companionship

and interest to their children. Many fine law-abiding Christian parents actually do not know what their children are doing or how they spend their leisure time. When they find out, it is often too late. Their remorse does not remove the shame which their negligence has caused.

Children must be taught to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-4). Parental authority typifies divine authority. If a child does not obey his earthly parents, how will he observe the divine law? God says, "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding" (Proverbs 4:1). "My son, keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 6:20). What a solemn responsibility placed upon the father. His own heart and mind must be steeped in the Word of God. Otherwise his words will be as sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. Parental authority rests solidly upon the commands of the Lord. The child has no alternative but to obey his father and mother, for God himself so instructed.

The mother is no less responsible for the instruction of the child. A good mother is worth a hundred school teachers. Call the roll of sons of great men, and, for the most part, you will get but sorry response unless the mothers are found

worthy. What the mother says or does in the presence of the child often has a more lasting impression than the words and deeds of the father. This is true because the mother is more intimately associated with the children from the beginning. Many a home is saved because of a godly mother.

More discipline is needed in our homes. Children need to recognize and respect the authority of their parents. Until they are led to do this, they are hardly prepared to respect either the laws of the land or the laws of God.

Let fathers and mothers instruct their sons and

daughters against the enticing ways of immorality. It would be well to read Proverbs 6:20 through 7:27 with your teen age children. Young people need to know about the sacred aspects of life as it pertains to the husband and wife relationship, and they must be warned against immorality and adulterous living. These lessons must be learned in the home. Only in proportion as we build our homes on God's immutable laws can they be successful.

--324, 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

The Unique Birth Of The Savior

Continued From Page 3

and directly quotes Mary as saying: "How can this be, since I do not know a man (i.e., I am a virgin)?" (vs 34). Luke left no room for question. Jesus was virgin-born.

Far from being a doctrine of little moment, the virgin birth stands as one of the best attested features of the Lord's life. God teaches it in His

Word by prophecy, by implication, and by plain history. We are obligated to confidently affirm this great truth and tell the world about the incomparable Savior!

--Via Reasoning From Revelation, Apologetics Press Inc. 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

Be Negative

Learn to say No! The world's in need of men who know a good from evil deed.

Learn to say No! And then stick to it,

Unmoved when men say, "Everybody's doing it."

Learn to say No! And don't delay it;

Fence-straddling fails; then stand and say it.

Learn to say No! Nor fear derision;

Stick bravely with your bold decision.

Learn to say No! We've waited long

For souls God-fearing, who hate the wrong.

Learn to say No! And in double measure

Christ's joy will be your constant treasure.

via Fairmont, WV

Hear The
Words Of Truth
 Radio Broadcast
 Daily Over
WPYK A.M. 1010
7:00-7:30 a.m.

The Bereans, The Bible, And The Brain

Steve Gunter

K. Ericsson, the supreme scholar of human cognitive skills (the art of thinking) has written, "exceptional memory may be acquired through extensive practice by persons with normal memory" (THE EXCEPTIONAL BRAIN, 1988). Therein lies revealed a profound principle with particular application for those who seek to improve in knowledge and mastery of the Word of God.

Millions hold the misconception that mental ability is purely physical (genetic) in its origin. The brain research of the past decade, however, has confirmed the popular proverb, "practice makes perfect." People of normal intelligence may achieve enormous results with diligent effort.

Acts 17:11 says, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the

word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so." Extraordinary effort reaps exceptional results. How did Apollos become "mighty in the scriptures" as is testified in Acts 18:24? It was not the gift of endowed intellect but rather energetic study.

In fact research indicates the gift of the "gifted" is the disposition to study in a very intense and persistent way. The reason so many lack knowledge today is not their deficiency of mental ability but their severe disinclination to work in the study of God's Word.

Historically Jewish and Christian civilization has produced prodigious advance in every area of academic and practical knowledge. The reason for such is the culture of disciplined mind and being is prerequisite to a proper understanding of the written word of Holy Scripture. Moses required of

the ancient Hebrews, "And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

If Hosea rightly proclaimed, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6) then conversely we shall be saved by knowledge. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Priority must go to a constant diligent extraordinary faithful and valiant effort to know the truth and to have a thus saith the Lord in the vital matter of salvation and eternity.

-- Via Four State Gospel News, Neosho, MO 64850.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

; but speak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

DECEMBER 22, 1989

NUMBER 51

Why Did Christ Come?



John Gipson

The first visit Jesus made to Nazareth, after entering his public ministry, is marked with unusual importance. "He entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." When he had

finished, he said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18). That which Isaiah had written as prophecy concerning the work of Christ was now to become history. What was the mission of Christ? Why did he come?

1. *Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor.* There was no middle class in Palestine. On the one hand you had the rulers, the wealthy, the powerful; and on the other hand the poor, the downtrodden, the under-privileged. The Jewish doctors, disdained Christ, but "the common people heard him gladly." Preaching to the poor was proof that he was the Messiah. To convince John the Baptist, Jesus said, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4). How refreshing the gospel is to the poor.

2. *Christ came to bind up the broken-hearted.* Those who are deeply afflicted will find consolation from Christ. In giving the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." And to his disciples he said, "Let not your heart be troubled." For those who are weighted down by calamities and sin, there is a balm in Gilead. Christ came to meet your needs.

3. *Christ came to deliver the captive.* The Jews should have understood this figure for they had been held captive in Babylon. How miserable they had been. How they longed for freedom. But there is yet another bondage: any man in sin is a man in bondage (John 3:34). But his case is not hopeless: Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make

you free."

4. *Christ came to give sight to the blind.* Throughout Palestine there were countless blind people. How sad their condition. A newspaper columnist saw a blind man in Central Park with these words on a placard, hanging around his neck: "It is May, and I am blind." To such folks Jesus gave sight. There is, however, a greater blindness . . . spiritual blindness. But weep not. There is a cure. Christ came "To open the blind eyes" (Isaiah 42:7).

5. *Christ came to proclaim the acceptable year*

of the Lord. The allusion here is to the Jewish year of Jubilee. Every fiftieth year the slaves were set free; chronic pauperism was cured by the forgiving of debts; and all property went back to the original owners. It was the year of release. Christ came to sound the jubilee-trumpet, to let the whole world know that "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

Why did Christ come? Read carefully Luke 4:18, 19, and you will find the answer.

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

"When Jesus Came"



Winfred Clark

This heading does not attempt to discuss the time of our Lord's birth. It merely takes a look at the phrase that appears again and again in the sacred text. Time and again we are able to see the difference his coming made.

We surely know something of the difference his coming into this world has made in the lives of people. He has made a difference in the

hearts and homes.

Think of the difference he made when it is said, "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house" Matthew 8:14. In this case he has come into a home with sickness. He touched her and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them. Could that home ever be the same after "Jesus came?" Could that ever be forgotten?

Think of the difference when it is said, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Matthew 16:13. When Jesus came they would be compelled to stop and think. They would have to give serious consideration concerning Christ. It would not be enough to just say something about Christ. They would have to say the right thing about the Son of God. His coming made the difference in what they thought.

Think of the difference that was made when it is said, "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus," John 20:26. These frightened men now have one standing in their midst who can speak peace to their hearts and give substance to their hopes. Before this occurred Thomas was an unbeliever, but before this meeting is over you will find him even stronger in faith. He will believe even more. If anybody ever wondered whether the coming of Jesus made a difference I am sure Thomas could tell you just how much of a difference he had made.

Yes, Jesus came and what a difference his coming has made!

--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.



Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
-Acts 26:25

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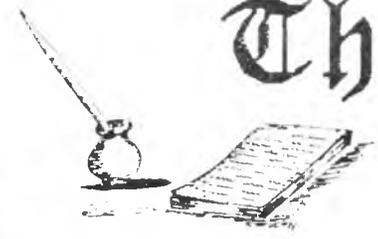
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

When Was Jesus Born?

Learning Christ . . . Teaching Christianity

Bill Graddy

One of the most simple and most sublime facts of life is that men must be taught the principles of Christianity. The teaching of Jesus Christ must be taught, learned, obeyed, and practiced.

Christianity can be taught because there is a body of known truth given by God through men as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 3:16-17). Jesus said, "And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). This does not mean that each individual will be taught the gospel. It means, the system of absolute truth will be revealed by God, and it will be this body of truth, when obeyed, that will make us free (John 8:32). The truth is available, but first, we must be taught.

How is truth taught? Many claim it is directly taught, that the Holy Spirit influences the hearts of men directly. But, the scriptures teach that we learn indirectly, by teaching through human instrumentality. Notice Paul said, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). Thus, we see that human agencies must be used to instruct people. This may be called foolishness by men, but it is the means God chose to reveal his will to men so that they might believe and be saved (I Corinthians 1:21). Mortals must go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature teaching them to observe all things that Jesus had commanded them (Matthew 28:18-20). Men cannot believe something they have not been taught (John 3:15).

Since those who will be saved must be taught, teaching becomes a pertinent process. We learn this process from the Master Teacher, Jesus himself. He used various methods such as parables,



David Wade

Verse one of the 18th century English carol declares, "God rest ye merry gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay, Remember Christ our Savior, Was born on Christmas Day." This is an unfounded assumption long accepted by millions of Christ-believing people. The **Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary**, pages 162, 163, states, "CHRISTMAS, the anniversary of the birth of Christ, and its observance; celebrated by most Protestants and by Roman Catholics on December 25; by Eastern Orthodox churches on January 6; and by the Armenian church of January 19. The first mention of its observance on December 25 is in the time of Constantine, about A.D. 325. The date of the birth of Christ is not known. The word Christmas is formed of Christ + Mass, meaning a religious service in commemoration of the birth of Christ. Whether the early Christians thought of or observed Christmas is not clear. Once introduced, the observance spread throughout Christendom. Some Christian bodies disapprove of the festival."

R. C. Foster, in **Studies in the life of Christ**, page 240, says, "The New Testament gives no definite data on this point. The earliest reference to this subject in extant Christian literature is from Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 180). He states that some thought the date of Christ's birth was April 21 and others April 22 and others May 30. He seems to condemn their speculative attempts as profane curiosity. The Eastern Church argued that Christ must have been born on January 6 because He was the second Adam and should have been born on the sixth day of the year as the first Adam was born on the sixth day of creation. They celebrated January 6 as the day for many centuries. The Armenian Church still celebrates this day. The celebration of December 25 as the day can be traced back as far as the fourth century. It seems to have arisen in the West. The predominance of Rome led to its well-nigh universal acceptance. The study of the Gospel narrative shows that December 25 fits into the known facts of the life of Christ. Counting back from the death of Herod, December 25 allows time for the various events described. The uncertainty as to the date of Jesus' birth should not disturb us. If it had been an essential feature of Christian faith the New Testament would have given more specific information."

There is great danger when people are lulled into thinking that they are right with God if they place great spiritual emphasis on Christmas and Easter. Perhaps it is for this reason that God left in obscurity the date of the Savior's birth. Paul's warning to Galatian Christians is very appropriate, "You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain" (Galatians 4:10-11).

We can enjoy the holiday in an appropriate Christian manner without making December 25 a holy day.

Hear The

WORDS OF TRUTH

Radio

Broadcast

Daily Over

WPYK A.M. 1010

7:00-7:30 a.m.

Money Will Buy

A bed but not sleep; books but not brains; food but not appetite. Finery but not beauty; a house but not a home; medicine but not health; luxuries but not culture; amusements but not happiness; religion but not salvation.

Via Duncan, OK

Is It Worth It?



J.C. Choate

Today I sat down and wrote out post-dated checks for \$117,897 to cover our 17 weekly broadcasts over Radio Sri Lanka through 1990. These programs are directed to India and neighboring countries in six languages.

A brother in New Delhi asked me recently if these radio broadcasts were not expensive. I replied that on the surface they seem to be, both as he would look at it as an Indian, and even as I would look at it as an American. But I also pointed out that when we know of the kind of response we are getting from all over the country (over 300 cards and letters a day, and almost all of them wanting a Bible correspondence course or other literature) and of the missionaries who would be required to criss-cross India to do the teaching that is presently being done by radio, and of all the money they would need for travel and living expenses, then the amount we pay for 17 weekly broadcasts is very little indeed -- only \$125 for each 15-minute transmission!

I went on to explain that actually it would be impossible to have enough workers and money to cover India with the gospel in a comparable way to radio preaching. And regardless of how many workers might come or how much money we might have for travel, still we would be unable to speak to multitudes of the people about Christ for the simple reason that radio can go where human beings are not welcomed to come.

So when we think of the masses of India who are hearing the gospel, when we think of all those who are writing for Bible correspondence courses and of the thousands who are obeying the gospel, when we think of the hundreds of congregations being established -- and all because of the radio preaching being done -- then the cost seems to be

almost give-away.

Yes, \$117,897 is a lot of money to put on radio preaching, and it is a big job to get brethren to give that kind of money for such work. It also took a lot of faith on my part to sit down and write out those checks and to believe that the money will be available month after month! But it would cost far more not to have done it, in terms of those who

would be deprived of hearing the gospel, and the many who would be lost because of our lack of faith. The Lord does hold responsible for preaching the gospel to the hundreds of millions of people throughout the Indian sub-continent. With that fact in mind, the question is not, "Isn't it too expensive?" but, "Can we afford to do any less?"

--Rt. 2, Box 156 Winona, MS 38967.

"Why Should I Believe In Jesus"

Garry Stanton

The very heart and soul of Christianity is based on a belief in Jesus. The Hebrew writer tells us that "without faith it is impossible to please" God (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus himself said, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). No one can be a son of God without first believing in Jesus, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). There is no "other name under heaven given among men" in which men can be saved (Acts 4:12). In Jesus Christ are all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). Jesus himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). These scriptures all attest to the importance of believing in Jesus.

We should believe in Jesus because He is deity, He is the divine Son of God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). After His baptism, "a voice from heaven" said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:15-17). Jesus gave up His home in heaven and His equality with God and "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6-7). He did this so that He could be that perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (Hebrews 2:9). But Jesus' humanity in no way takes away from His deity; even His name, Emmanuel, means "God with us" or "God among men" (Matthew 1:23). Paul, in referring to the church, stated how that God purchased it "with

his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Jesus was not just another good man, but He is the only begotten Son of God.

Secondly, we should believe in Jesus because He is the fulfillment of prophecy. The life story of Jesus was written generations before His birth. Many events of His life, from His birth to ascension back to His heavenly home, were foretold in the holy prophets. His birthplace, Micah 5:2; born of a virgin, Isaiah 7:14; of the tribe of Judah, Micah 5:2; humble but victorious entry into Jerusalem upon an ass, Zechariah 9:9; His betrayal price of 30 pieces of silver, Zechariah 11-12-13; His death between two criminals, Isaiah 53:12; the casting of lots for His garments, Psalm 22:18; the fact that not a bone of His would be broken, Psalm 34:20; just to mention a few. In all there are over 330 such prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, and every one of them has been fulfilled in Jesus! The chances of these prophecies being fulfilled in one man are astronomical, even thousands of times greater than the odds to win the Publishers Clearing House Grand Prize! A mathematician has calculated the odds of one person fulfilling only 48 of the major prophecies of the Messiah as one in 10¹⁵⁷ (the number 10 followed by 157 zeros!). The chances that one person would fulfill all 330+ prophecies is almost non-existent, yet Jesus Christ did! This proves Him to be the "promised one" and worthy of our faith.

Thirdly, we should believe in Jesus because of the miracles that He did. We do not have to witness His miracles today in order to **know** that they occurred because we have the inspired record of the same.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

It was not only the Lord's disciples that attested to His miracles but also His enemies. In Mark 3:1-6, His enemies brought a man with a withered hand into the synagogue where Jesus would be, not to see if Jesus **COULD** heal him, but to see if He **WOULD** heal him on the Sabbath. They knew that Jesus had the power to heal, and so they hoped to trap Him by his doing so on the Sabbath day. Later, after Jesus' ascension back to heaven, His enemies would confess the power that Jesus' apostles had to perform miracles too, "Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is mani-

Old Testament Characters To Be Theme Of 1990 MSOP Lectureship

The Twenty-Fourth Annual Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship will discuss **Great Lessons from Old Testament Characters**. Sixty-four of the notable -- and notorious -- persons in the Old Testament will be discussed by fifty-two of the finest speakers of this generation. The lectureship will also feature Thomas B. Warren speaking daily on "The New Hermeneutic" and Garland Elkins conducting the daily "Open Forum." Evening speakers are Thomas B. Warren, Noel Merideth, Andrew Connally, Winfred Clark, and Robert R. Taylor, Jr. As usual, the hard cover volume is being published.

Everyone is invited to join the great crowds [450-500 during the day lectures and 700-800 in the evening] in the wonderful study, the beautiful singing, and the uplifting association and fellowship. Lectureship week always begins with the last Sunday in March, this year March 25-29, 1990. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. . ." (Rom. 15:4).

Where Is The Bartender?

Author's Name Withheld By Request

I watched a man die. The doctors had said that he probably wouldn't make it through the night. The family had asked for the preacher to come; I got less than two hours' sleep that night, but was glad to be of help.

Time passed slowly. We sat, we stood, we paced; always our eyes were riveted on the monitor that told how fast his heart was beating, and on the squiggly line that indicated the quality of the beat. At first, the heart was racing; the digital readout fluctuated almost constantly, but after an hour or two it began to show lower numbers. The change came slowly at first, but as the hours passed the "slowdown" began picking up speed -- 70's . . . 60's . . . 50's . . . 40's . . . 30. . . the atmosphere was electric . . . 20 . . . as he missed a breath the family urged him on and he gasped again . . . numbers in

the teens began appearing . . . suddenly the monitor showed a flurry of activity and the squiggly line went flat. Though unrelated to the man, I loved the family and was caught up in the pathos of the occasion; tears came to my eyes too.

But why was I there? In life, his favorite "pew" was a barstool, his favorite "preacher" the bartender, and his only "church" the local bar. Where was the bartender that night? Where were his drinking buddies? Why had they not been called as death approached? The bartender would not conduct the funeral; it would not be held in the barroom. All his buddies could have said was that "He was a good ole boy," and when death comes, that is of little comfort. It will be up to the preacher to find words to comfort a grief-stricken family.

The scene varies -- sometimes it is the job,

sometimes the golf course, sometimes the lake. These activities may not have been "sinful," in and of themselves; they just kept that person's eyes off of God and eternity. As death approaches, the boss, the greenskeeper, the bait-seller are nowhere to be found. The world has milked another precious soul of all it could get out of him and then dropped him flat! The world will do that to you, you know.

There is only One that you can always count on -- in life or death -- that is Jesus. He will walk with you every day of your life, and when it comes times to cross over Jordan, He will never let you down.

--Via Old Paths, Box 563, Liberal Kansas 67901.

"Christ, The Head"



Bobby Key

Some years back millions mourned the death of Pope Pius XII. Press dispatches told of many special masses conducted throughout the world. Millions were in sorrow because their leader had died. Pope John XXIII was appointed to take his place. He too died. Other popes were

appointed, they were also taken by death. The current pope, John Paul II will die. The Roman Catholic Church has had over 260 different heads. Their head changes every few years! How sad to belong to a church whose head is subject to death.

Has it occurred to you that you can belong to a church that has only one head? The head of Christ's church is Christ Himself (Ephesians 1:22). Christ said of himself, "I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive forevermore. A--men:

"Why Should I Believe In Jesus"

Continued From Page 3

fest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it" (Acts 4:16). All the miracles that Jesus and His apostles did, prove that Jesus was who He claimed to be!

The evidence is overwhelming! It is up to us to open our hearts and eyes to those truths. Let us all accept the evidence and be willing to make the "good confession" with our mouths and our lives that Jesus is "the Christ the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

-Via Four State Gospel News, 1330 Benton Avenue, Neosho, MO 64850.

and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:8) Yes, Christ is the head of His church. He is not subject to death. The Bible is as silent as the tomb regarding Christ having selected someone to represent His church on earth. Jesus Christ has no vicar or personal representative to direct His church. Christ, as head of the church, has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-20). He has never given any of this authority to a pope!

The church of Christ has no earthly headquarters, but has a very simple congregational government

composed of elders and deacons (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). Since Christ has all authority, no man or set of men has any right to make laws to govern the body of Christ. As members of His body, we are taught to speak the same thing. This can be done only when we "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

You need be neither Catholic nor Protestant. It is enough to be a Christian (Acts 28:11). Why not obey the gospel of Christ and be added to the church with one head who is alive forevermore?

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Learning Christ . . . Teaching Christianity

Continued From Page 2

stories, one-on-one, groups, proverbs, miracles, and debates. He used object lessons such as nature, people, animals, and children. Teaching must take place before learning is achieved. Teaching precedes learning. However, learning does not always follow teaching. Therefore, methods, personalities, equipment, environment and attitudes are of great importance.

When proper teaching has occurred and learning has taken place, obedience of that new knowledge must be forthcoming. Sometimes submission follows, and sometimes rebellion follows (Luke 7:30; I Corinthians 15:2). It is the case, at times, that men have been taught, and know the truth but will pervert the truth into a lie (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). We have false doctrine because we have false teachers.

If obedience follows teaching and learning, faith will be exercised. This knowledge could be a lie, and it could be the truth. Adam and Eve were taught by Satan to believe a lie, and they obeyed a lie (Genesis 3:1-19). We must, however, be taught the truth (John 8:32), learn the truth, and obey the truth.

The above may be implemented in the home, the church, Bible classes or anywhere. The teaching of the gospel is the mission and work of the church.

We must put into practice these holy precepts to the saving of our souls (I Timothy 4:16).

In teaching, words become the ideas through which we learn. For example, God, Christ, Holy Spirit, heaven, hell, salvation, sin, and love are words whose meaning must be imparted, - many times by flash cards in the first grade, before learning and obedience can result. What do these words mean? What do they symbolize? How did we learn to read them? We must be taught to learn to read, pronounce, and know the meaning of words before we can believe and obey that which will please God. God chose words in which to communicate his will to us. We must choose to accept and obey these words (Acts 2:40). Therefore, let us receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls (James 1:21), because "he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

The teaching program of the church is important. Are you involved? Do you plan to teach? Study Hebrews 5:10-12.

--Via The Pillar, P.O. Box 75 Cave City, Arkansas 72521.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Faith

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 25

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The Land Of Beginning Again



Joe E. Galloway

Probably all of us have wished at times that there was some way to simply begin again. Some act we committed caused us mental or physical pain, maybe caused difficulty to others, or perhaps led to difficulties we had not foreseen. At times like this we wish that we could lay aside, forget

(and that others would forget) all our mistakes, and that we could start all over again. Louisa Fletcher well expressed this desire in the beginning and ending stanzas of a poem with the above title:

I wish that there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches
And all of our poor selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door,
And never be put on again.

It is physically impossible to turn back the clock and do something over again, differently. We cannot literally unsay words that we have said. We cannot go back and change an action that unleashed a chain of effects which brought ourselves and others much grief. Yet all is not hopeless!

We cannot literally unsay words that we have said. We cannot go back and change an action that unleashed a chain of effects which brought ourselves and others much grief. Yet all is not hopeless!

God has provided a way of beginning again! This way is revealed in his word. Although the Bible can keep us from sin (Psalm 119:11), it also has the power to make us live again when we afflict ourselves by sinning: "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word" (Psalm 119:107).

The Alien Sinner

One who is not a child of God can begin again by obeying the gospel. This is such a complete "beginning again" that the Bible describes it as being "born again" (I Peter 1:23). The penitent sinner, in imitation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is buried in baptism and then rises to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Having entered into Christ by baptism (Galatians 3:27), we are told that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Truly, as God views it these scriptures show that the new Christian has found "the land of beginning again!"

Jesus told Nicodemus that one must be born again to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). Nicodemus was puzzled, knowing that one cannot physically begin life again (3:4). So Jesus explained, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (3:5). Jesus later gave the equivalent of this in Mark 16:16 when he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." One is "born of the Spirit" by believing the Spirit-inspired word of God; he is "born of the water" by being baptized. This is God's way of permitting an alien sinner to begin again!

The Erring Child of God

The erring child of God can also begin again. He does this by repenting of his sin, confessing it to God and to those he has wronged, and by asking God's forgiveness. Simon, who because of sin was perishing and had "neither part nor lot in this matter," was told to "repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought

of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:20-22). "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Having "cleansed us from all sins" by the blood of Christ, (v. 7) we are again allowed, as God views it, the privilege of beginning again! (We who are fellow Christians need to also recognize this new beginning that God has granted. In doing this we will not hold the past against such a cleansed fellow Christian!)

To All Christians

The New Testament also speaks of a sort of "beginning again" to the Christian who is doing his best to faithfully serve God. This is often spoken of as a renewal. As one presents his body as a living sacrifice to God, he is to be transformed from the world "by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). Although we may become discouraged by mistakes and failures, "we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Corinthians 5:16). This is accomplished by our distinguishing between things temporal and things eternal, and by emphasizing in our lives that which is eternal (v. 18). We are told to put out of our lives "the old man" and to "be renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10). Since this renewal comes through knowledge, it is called the "renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

Let's be thankful that, through Christ, we can "begin again!" By availing ourselves of this blessing we can some day actually enter that "land of beginning again" in heaven, where "the former things are passed away" and God has promised, "I make all things new" (Revelation 21:4, 5).

--218 Pinecrest Dr., Greeneville, TN 37743.



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-Acts 26:25

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"Disappointed?"

Dan Winkler

INTRODUCTION

Ever had your dreams thrown over the edge only to burst amidst the crags of reality? Have you ever seen the sunshine of hopeful possibilities overshadowed by the clouds of present-day frustrations? Have you ever started the day with a whistle and a song only to close it with a whine and a sigh?

Disappointed? Are you/have you ever been disappointed in someone, in something, or with life in general?

Perhaps the words of David can help us work through times of despondency.

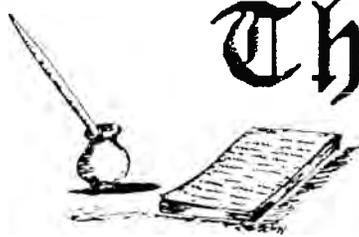
"Know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your heart upon your bed, and be still" (Psalms 4:3, 4).

(1) **First, to handle disappointment, we must possess and nurture the proper relationship with God by living right.** Yea, "The LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself." The ability to face life and live happily depends on our obedience of God's Word. The Psalmist wrote, "Blessed (lit. "happy") are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart" (Psalms 119:1,2).

(2) **Second, to handle disappointment, we must learn to trust in God's care and enjoy the power of prayer.** We must come to know the peace of David's words, "The Lord will hear when I call unto him." The charge, "In nothing be anxious; but

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

What Time Is It?



David Wade

to accomplish life's worthwhile goals while we have time and opportunity. Solomon declares, "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). As we approach the new year, it is appropriate for us to consider some of the Biblical admonitions about the use of our time.

1) "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make o provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:11-14).

2) "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the

Our timeless God has given to humanity the blessing of time. "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night" (Psalm 90:4). Unlike our eternal God, we are very limited by the amount of time He has given to us (Psalm 90:10). It behooves us to use our time wisely and

word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

3) "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:2-5).

4) "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now 'if the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:17-19).

5) "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). "'Today,' after such a long time, as it has been said: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts'" (Hebrews 4:7).

On her deathbed, Queen Elizabeth I was overheard to say, "All of my possessions for a moment of time." We ought to place a precious premium on time. Use time wisely! The time you have right now is the only time you have!

Neglected Homes

Cleon Lyles

There is no question in the minds of those who think that one of the major problems of our civilization is the break-down of the home. It has not come about suddenly, and neither did it come about intentionally. I believe it has come as a result of our failure to recognize our greatest values. Recently I read this statement: "If he is really active in groups dedicated to fighting juvenile delinquency, integrating the family and making pals of his sons, a man can avoid having dinner or an evening at home for months at a time." Now, who would question the value of these things? But, are they more valuable than the home?

One person is busy making a living. Not long

ago a man came to talk with me about the problems that were wrecking his home. He said, "I have been so busy trying to make enough to pay bills and provide better things for my family, that I have not been a very good husband or father." That which caught up with him has also caught up with many men and will with many others. What he was doing is good in its place. It is good for a man to provide for his family, but there comes a time when he must decide whether it is best to provide all the physical comforts of a home at the expense of being a husband and father. Those who have tried it have found that it is too great a price to

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"A Symbol Of Survival And Hope"



Don Williams

The preceding words were used to describe a man, Buck Helm, a longshoreman's clerk, who was found alive four days after the Interstate 880 intersections in Oakland had collapsed on top of him. For twenty-eight days he remained in Kaiser-Permanente Medical center, suffering from a fractured skull and neck,

three broken ribs, nerve damage to his legs and kidney problems caused by dehydration. On Sunday, November 19th, he died.

What is ironic to me is that, Monday morning, I had received a bulletin article about Mr. Helm, concerning his rescue, and his survival against great odds. And yet, Sunday afternoon, before the article had reached my desk, Buck Helm was dead. How monumental had been his survival? A spokesman for the hospital, pointed out: "He represented more than just a person. I think to many people he very much represented the event of the earthquake." And yet, now, he was just another

statistic -- the 68th victim of the October 17th earthquake.

I have been reading recently the moving story of the cross of Christ found in the book **Six Hours One Friday**, by Max Lucado. While he lived, Jesus was a symbol of survival and hope to the Jews. Although not completely understood, they saw him as a glimmer of hope -- of finally ridding themselves of the dreadful Roman "chains of power." Earlier, they had tried to force Jesus to become their earthly, field general and king, but he would have nothing of it (John 6:15). Even to the very end, they held on, hope against hope, that he would be the one to redeem Israel, to bring her back to her former pristine glory and prominence (Luke 24:21).

But he died. Jewish rulers had delivered trumped-up charges against him, and they had forced the hand of Pilate to let his death "slide by." Roman soldiers had enjoyed beating him, and subjecting to torture "a celebrity." And so, for six hours on a Friday, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, hung between heaven and earth. Not seen as divine by man, he, the Perfect One, had become "sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (I Corinthians 5:21). But now, he was dead. His death was not understood, even by his faithful disciples. He had foretold of his death, even of his resurrection

three days later, but they did not believe.

However, this story does not end in the same way as that of Buck Helm's story. I hasten to add that there is an eternity of difference between the life and death of Buck Helm, and the life and death of Jesus Christ. Only the phrase, "symbol of survival and hope" caused me to think of the analogy. For you see, our hope in Christ today is not dead -- it is a "lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3). His death is not to be the end of hope, but the beginning -- for you see, Jesus did rise up from that grave three days later. He does give us life and meaning and survival and purpose today in the midst of a sinful, imperfect world; Jesus is our hope as "an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19). Hallelujah, Christ arose!

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

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Neglected Homes

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pay. Why should a man use all his time building a home that can never be a home? What will his family have for which to thank him? Too many people think that the greatest duty of being the head of a house is providing food and clothing. Actually, in the eyes of Jesus, those were the lesser things of life.

Then there is the woman who feels that she must be a part of every social organization in her community. Of course we recognize the value of many of these organizations. But many mothers never get to spend much time with their children

because they are busy entertaining or being entertained. Children are reared by others or left to pester the neighbors. Later, when the children get into trouble the mother does not understand wherein she failed. Somehow many women expect their children and husbands to be proud of them because they are able to do a lot of things socially, but many of them lost their husbands for that very reason. Children need a mother and the man needs a wife. Whatever it takes to be a good homemaker should be first in relation to the home. A home can never be made while the homemaker stays

away from it.

These social activities also have a way of destroying our usefulness to God. Any time they are allowed to interfere with our service to God they are wrong, regardless of how right they may be otherwise. Jesus said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God." Sometimes they keep people from attending the services at night. They have a meeting with their club. Or they keep people from attending many nights of a gospel meeting. You cannot afford to use club night for church, you know. I remember having dinner in the home of a man during a meeting. After the dinner he said, "My son and I won't be at services tonight. This is our show night. We always go to the show on this night each week." He thought he was doing that which was best for his child. He wanted to be a pal with his boy. But, while doing what he thought was good, he was teaching his boy that the show was more important than worshipping God. Even God could stand aside while they went to the show. It is no wonder that a boy who has such disadvantages, which some call advantages, grows up with little respect for the church.

We need to get back to the home and home life. A home where people love to be together. A home where people can read the Bible together, pray together and attend the worship together. Such homes will make any nation strong. Without them any nation will be weak.

--Via Keynoter, P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203.

"Disappointed?"

Continued From Page 2

in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God," is coupled to a promise of peace, ". . . and the peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts and your thoughts" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

(3) **Third, to handle disappointment we must stand up to temptation and sin.** When we are emotionally upset we are more vulnerable to temptation and sin. But rather than turning from God in times of discouragement, we must continually "stand in awe, and sin not." Remember those familiar words, "Blessed (lit. "happy") is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight in the law of the LORD" (Psalms 1:1, 2).

(4) **Fourth, to handle disappointment, we must talk to ourselves; that is, work on our own attitudes.** "Commune with your own heart," David wrote. Indeed, my "approach" to life and my "actions" within life depend on my "attitudes" toward life. Consequently, we are told, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Thankfully, if we will address the difficulties we face and maneuver through the disappointments we experience with the above words of David, we will more readily know the calm expressed in the last two words of the passage, "Be still."

"Isn't that great?!"

When We Have Our Priorities Right, Everything Else Is Easy!



Edsel Burleson

We admire people who are busy, yet many are so busy with things that they fail to give thought to priorities. Harvey Porter once wrote, "I have never seen so many people so busy with so many things to do. Working people not only put in their forty hours per week (and many work far more than forty hours per week), they often take home work to do at night, they attend meetings of community work and church work, P.T.A. and lodge or club, and workout at the health club. Children and teenagers do not just attend school. They have clubs, band, sports and often jobs after school. And, it is the same with retired people. They travel, are in clubs of various kinds and relatives expect them to do more now that they are retired.

We admire people who are busy, yet many are so busy with things that they fail to give thought to priorities.

Harvey Porter once wrote, "I have never seen so many people so busy with so many things to do. Working people not only put in their forty hours per week (and many work far more than forty hours per week), they often take home

"The sad thing about all this is that we often get too busy to attend worship, to study the Bible, to go to special Bible study classes, to have people in our homes for fellowship, to visit the sick, to go to a wedding or funeral, to call someone to encourage them or to send a card. We neglect those things that do not box us in - that do not scream to get done."

Throughout our lives we have frequently heard that an idle mind is the Devil's workshop. That it is. But few give thought to the possibility that a busy mind can also serve Satan. Many have their days crammed so full of appointments, obligations, and various responsibilities that little if any time is left for prayer and meditation. This is exactly where Satan wants us - too busy for God.

Jesus taught the value of priorities when he said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26, 27). When one has his priorities right, he will never be too busy for God!

When one becomes a Christian, priorities change. He puts first things first, not second or third or

fourth, and does not let Satan fool him into thinking he is doing OK as long as he is keeping busy. When we have our priorities right, everything else is easy.

A poet, identified only as "V. C." wrote the following lines entitled "IT MATTERS MUCH."

It matters little about the gold,
Or rank of titles ten thousand fold;
But a heart to give the human touch
To all men as brothers -- it matters much.

It matters little - by humble sphere,
It matters much - my conscience clear,
A mind to lighten Adversary's touch
On my fellowman - it matters much.

It matters little about the years
In a world of sorrow, care and tears;
But the heavenly Father's loving touch
On the crown I wear - it matters much.

--Via West End News, 420 Seventh St., S.W.,
Birmingham, AL 35211.

God's Plan Is To Make Much Of The Man



Cecil Corkren

As we enter a "New Year" and a "New Decade" we should ask as did God in Psalm 8:4 and in Hebrews 2:6-8: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Man should be the most important in all that we plan to do in 1990. Paul said, "Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Philippians 4:17). We like Paul should desire man's fruit or progress more than what he or she can give. Our Lord aimed for the heart of man when he said, "Where a man's treasure is there will be his heart." Our gifts and services are expressions of our love. Jesus said, "These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23). In Matthew 23:14 and 25:34-40, the emphasis is on the man; that is the widows, the sick, the hungry, the naked and those in prison.

We are in search for new methods, new ideas and new organizations to advance the cause of Christ, secure a greater numerical growth, and to enlarge our financial intake. Meanwhile, we lose sight of the man who falls into our plans. His importance is lost in our pursuits of the mundane, while little care is given to man and his spiritual needs.

What the church needs is not more machinery, new organizations or more methods, but to go back to first century Christianity where they "made much of the man." Every man had need (Acts

2:45), "Neither was there any among them that lacked "Every man brought according to his ability" (Acts 4:34). The individual was VERY IMPORTANT!

No school is greater than its faculty. No church is greater or more important than its members. The men and women who make up a congregation is its strength, not the plans or methods etc. Great men and women of prayer, courage, purity and faith is where the power lies. Our greatest priori-

ties should be toward the sick, naked, feeble minded, those in the prisons and those who are heart broken. God's plan is to make much of the man.

God works mightily in us when He can find a suitable man, who makes man his plan. A congregation can work wonders when they return to the apostolic plan. MAKING MUCH OF THE MAN.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

Old Testament Characters To Be Theme Of 1990 MSOP Lectureship

The Twenty-Fourth Annual Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship will discuss **Great Lessons from Old Testament Characters**. Sixty-four of the notable -- and notorious -- persons in the Old Testament will be discussed by fifty-two of the finest speakers of this generation. The lectureship will also feature Thomas B. Warren speaking daily on "The New Hermeneutic" and Garland Elkins conducting the daily "Open Forum." Evening speakers are Thomas B. Warren, Noel Merideth, Andrew Connally, Winfred Clark, and Robert R. Taylor, Jr. As usual, the hard cover volume is being published.

Everyone is invited to join the great crowds [450-500 during the day lectures and 700-800 in the evening] in the wonderful study, the beautiful singing, and the uplifting association and fellowship. Lectureship week always begins with the last Sunday in March, this year March 25-29, 1990. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. . ." (Rom. 15:4).

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