



(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 28

JANUARY 3, 1992

NUMBER 1

Flight 92



Bobby Key

Welcome aboard! Each of us has entered the new year and begun a journey that we will call Flight 92. Take off was exactly on schedule, our flying time will be 365 days, and we expect to arrive on time.

I expect us to be flying through much turbulence. Conflict between nations will continue. Strong powers will continue to force their will on weaker neighbors. There will be violence and disaster in the air, on the land, and in the seas. Earthquakes, tornados, floods, and fires will occur.

Some of us will not make it to the end of the flight. The evil one, our arch enemy, will do all within his power to shoot us out of the air. Souls of men are at stake. The mind of men will be involved. The battle will be real, "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (II Corinthians 10:4). "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). Surely no generation before us has needed such mental and moral and physical discipline.

It is little wonder that we are told, "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). We cannot afford the heavy baggage of pride, jealousy, anger, envy, impurity, laziness, greed, and prejudice. These things must be put away if we expect to finish our course with joy.

Since God has always been concerned about man's heart, or mind, we must "keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). We are what we eat,

physically, and we are what we think, spiritually. Evil thoughts are sharp tools of the devil. They stab, and wound, and crucify. When the mind is dominated by great, negative, destructive emotions such as hatred, anger, jealousy, envy, resentment, fear, anxiety, guilt, or frustration the entire body will be affected. Your thinking affects your health. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

All of us who have boarded Flight 92 can expect increased assaults against our homes. Our marriage, our family will have much to do with the destiny of our soul. What about your home? Is it secure in Christ? Is the relationship found in your home sweet and reassuring? Is it a place of quiet refuge where you find rest from the toils of life?

Some marriage partners have retreated behind an armor of silence. One won't come out, and the other can't get in. A Christian lady said some time ago, "My husband and I just can't talk to each other." What a shame!

Flight 92 will bring increased pressure from without and from within. Whirling and twirling about us, this pressure will pull us down and threaten to destroy us. We must be very careful that we not lose control and find our lives being forced in directions we never wanted to go. Don't let the devil take over this flight and hi-jack your craft.

Remember to make Jesus your pilot on Flight 92. With Him in full control of your life, you can safely make it through. Look to Jesus, who is the "author and finisher of your faith," and He will give you peace, safety, and eternal salvation.

--324 17th Ave. SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Proper Emphasis



Joe E. Galloway

While commenting on Peter's use of the sword to defend Jesus (John 18:10) and Jesus' statement to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), brother J. W. McGarvey said: "While we know better than to rely upon the aid of the sword for the advance of truth, we are often tempted to put undue trust in other 'carnal weapons' which are equally futile. Wealth and eloquence and elaborate church buildings have but little saving grace in them. It is the truth which wins" (The Fourfold Gospel, p. 692).

Brother McGarvey was not against church buildings, nor was he against money when honestly acquired and properly used. He was well educated and probably was more eloquent in speech than most of us today. Yet, he knew that these "carnal" things could not be substituted for the saving gospel in attempting to win souls. Without doubt, brother McGarvey would have been dismayed at the carnal things many depend on today for church growth!

The three "F's," Food, Fun, and Frolic, are often depended on today to bring people into the church. Certainly it is not wrong to eat, nor are occasions of proper entertainment sinful. It is good for Christians to enjoy each other's company as we get to know each other better. And, to invite others

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David Wade Editor

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Happy New Year!



David Wade

Lord willing, if we do not depart this life to meet the Lord, and if the Lord delays his coming, we, then, will experience all of 1992. God made a remarkable promise to Noah, and to us all. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"

renewal, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Corinthians 4:16).

With this renewal comes newness of strength to accomplish God's will. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:28-31).

Paul adds, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

3) YEAR -- Lord willing, the following year lies before us. However, we must remember that we are mortal and our days are numbered. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:10, 12).

In view of this fact, we must never boast of tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1). We must develop the attitude, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:15). We should never be anxious for tomorrow (Matthew 6:34).

In the words of Omar Kayyam:

"Tomorrow's fate though thou be wise,
Thou canst not tell, nor yet surmise.
Pass, therefore, not today in vain,
For it will never come again!"

Our many thanks to our faithful readers and writers. May you have a happy and prosperous 1992!

Priorities Right In The Home



W. T. Allison

There is nothing we need more greatly in the church of the Lord than a proper arranging of priorities. God has always demanded first place in the lives of His people (Exodus 20:3-6, Matthew 22:37, 6:33). In fact, with God it is first place or no place. And, the home is the best place for proper priorities to be indelibly written on the hearts of our children. This cannot be accomplished when the following things are adhered to:

1. When we are early to the ballgame, but late to worship services.
2. When we see that our children do their school work but never check to see if they have completed their Bible school lesson.
3. When they cannot stay up late on school nights lest it infringe upon their school work, but they can stay up and watch the "late show" on Saturday night, even though they will be attending Bible school the next morning.
4. We will not let them miss school, even though they do not want to attend, but we cater to their whims and let them miss Bible school because they happen not to want to attend that given day.
5. We know the names of their public school teachers but we cannot call the names of all their Bible school teachers at church.
6. We will serve as room mother or president of PTA at the public school but we will never take part in arranging for various functions for their Bible class.
7. We attend their public school open house but do not attend the open house on the closing day of VBS.
8. We will not take our vacation so as to cause

(Genesis 8:22).

Using the above title to direct our thoughts for this article, let us consider the following:

1) HAPPY It is obvious on every page of the Bible that God wants us to live our lives in such a way so as to be truly happy. The Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount are a good example of this great truth (Matthew 5:3-12). The word "blessed" could just as well be translated "happy" and is so rendered in many modern English Bibles. True happiness is dependent upon our seeking and doing God's will.

As Jesus said to the Twelve, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote the following verse that well illustrates the point:

"Our lives are songs; God writes the words,
And we set them to music at pleasure.
And the song grows glad, or sweet or sad,
As we choose to fashion the measure."

2) NEW -- Newness of life is found only in Christ. "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). The only way we can enter into Christ is through faith and obedience (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:26-27). Through God's grace and forgiveness, we can have continual

them to miss any school, but we have no qualms of conscience about taking our vacation during the time of VBS or a gospel meeting.

9. They see us go to work even though we do not feel too well, but stay at home from church services under the same circumstances.

10. They see us avidly look at and study their

school work, but never pay any attention at all to the handwork brought home from their Bible classes.

Yes, with such situations prevailing, what priorities are being established in the hearts of our children?

--1901 Schillinger Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

Proper Emphasis

Continued From Page 1

to such social functions may help break down prejudice and help build friendship and trust which will expedite teaching them the truth. Yet, it is possible that we may become so unbalanced in this that such carnal things become our main emphasis, with little time, interest, or emphasis left for teaching the gospel.

Such misplaced emphasis may result in numerical growth, but not in real conversion. Some may decide they enjoy these things so much with us that they want to be a part of the congregation, so they submit to baptism. If they are baptized for this reason, instead of out of conviction that such is necessary for their salvation as they submit to God's will, have they really obeyed from the heart (see Romans 6:16-18)? If it has taken "food, fun and frolic" to bring a person into the congregation, what will it take to keep him? More and more of the same! It is sad to hear of some congregations that have traveled this route so far that they appear to be more a social club than a spiritual group of God's people.

Let's be careful to keep the emphasis where it should be! As the church, our purpose is to faithfully teach the saving message of the gospel to a lost world (I Timothy 3:15). We need to strengthen those who are saved and encourage them to greater faithfulness and good works (Hebrews 10:24). We want to glorify God in all things (I Peter 4:11). We can have fun together

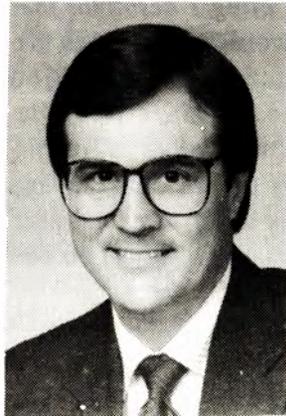
while we do all this, but let's keep such in proper perspective as we keep spiritual things out in front! Paul said, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ . . ." (II Corinthians 10:4, 5). This stresses our **spiritual** work of dispelling error and teaching the truth,

thus bringing people to obedience to Christ. It is both a **positive** and a **negative** work. It does not give support to the social, carnal emphasis to which so many are resorting to draw people. Nor does it agree with the growing idea among so many that we should never be negative, but always positive.

Think on these things!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

"Two Things Which Put Life In Perspective"



Dan Winkler

Ephesians 4:1, 2; Philippians 2:2-4; James 4:10: 1

Scratched on the wall of a childhood clubhouse are the rules:

Nobody act small;

Nobody act big;

Everybody act medium;

Humility is the virtue that helps us keep ourselves in check and our lives in balance. We, thus, find verse after verse in our Bibles teaching us to be lowly in heart (i.e.

Peter 5:5, 6).

In II Corinthians 12:1-10, we find two things that humbled Paul and helped him put life in proper perspective: the glory of God (v. 1-6) and the grace of Jesus (v. 7-10).

"The Glory of God" Humbled Paul

(II Corinthians 12:1-6)

In this passage, Paul was "*caught up*" into the third heaven. The word translated, means to "take something forcefully" (Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 472). We might say that Paul was transformed from this world of frailties and fear, hurled through the stratosphere and ionosphere, maneuvered through the heavenly bodies of the Milky Way, only to be jettisoned into another dimension -- one of immortality and incorruption. There, he was humbled amidst the glory of God. Listen to him carefully.

(1) "*I know a man in Christ. . .*" -- This event so humbled Paul that he reflected on it as if he was standing away from himself, describing himself. Contrary to those who force themselves into the spotlight, Paul did not wish to draw any attention to himself. Why would he feel so insignificant, so inconsequential? He had stood amidst the glory of God!

Contrary to those who force themselves into the spotlight, Paul did not wish to draw any attention to himself. Why would he feel so insignificant, so inconsequential? He had stood amidst the glory of God!

(2) "*. . . fourteen years ago . . .*" -- Precise dating of this event is difficult because of the obscurities attached to the dating of II Corinthians. Most placed this event about A.D. 44, around the time Paul and Barnabas were called to evangelize the Gentiles. Whenever it was, it was a banner day for Paul, a pivot-day around which the rest of his life would revolve. We might say, "That was the day of

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"Two Things Which Put Life In Perspective"

Continued From Page 3

my graduation . . . my baptism!" Paul would have thought, "That was the day I stood amidst the glory of God!"

(3) ". . . *whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth . . .*" -- Paul had several "visionary experiences" (Acts 9:22-26; 16:9; 18:9, 10; 22:17-21; 27:24). But there was something unique about the vision of II Corinthians 12, something that left the scars of confusion on Paul's heart and questions in his mind -- questions that only God could answer. Yea, this time he was struck by the amazement and the awe of standing amidst the glory of God!

(4) ". . . *such a one was caught up even to the third heaven. . .*" -- The first heaven would be home of the birds; the second, would be home of the stars; and the third would be home of God. We should note that this third heaven was something so wonderful, Paul described it as a pleasure garden of trees, shrubs, fountains and flowers -- "Paradise." What made it so wonderful? So magnanimous? It radiated and was filled with the glory of God (Cf. Revelation 21:22, 23)!

(5) ". . . *and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. . .*" -- Explain that. How could he have "heard" the "unspoken"? How could he have, if permission had been granted, "uttered" the "unspoken"? We find here words of emphasis. Even Paul could not put it all together. He could only step back from this wonderful experience as if to say, "Words cannot express nor am I permitted to reveal the splendor of standing amidst the glory of God!"

"The Grace Of Jesus" Also Humbled Paul (v. 7-10)

Paul was a man of "exceeding greatness" because of "the revelations" he had received. Think about it. Half of our New Testament came from this man. How did he remain humble with such being true? Listen to his thought-provoking explanation.

(1) ". . . *that I should not be exalted over much, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh . . .*" -- Speculations prevail as to this thorn's identity: spiritual temptations; persecutions; carnal temptations; his physical appearance (cf. II Corinthians 10:10); epilepsy (cf. Galatians 4:14); severe headaches; eye trouble - in specific, "ophthalmia" (cf. Acts 9:9; Galatians 4:15; 6:11); and malaria.

Might we add one more speculation to the list? In Paul's writings, one thought seemed to have humbled his soul and emphasized his dependence on grace more than any other. It was the haunting nightmare of his past as one who made havoc of the faith (I Timothy 1:13-16)! O, but what he had to live down! I wonder how many of his nights were disturbed by the tormenting cry of Christian sisters he had destined to widowhood. How many nights did he awaken to cold sweat, grieved by the memory of children he had orphaned via his misguided zeal? Wouldn't the tear-filled eyes of a widow or the quivering whimper of a child without a daddy or mommy call nightmares to your

bedside? It did Paul's! Could it be that his prevailing thoughts about "yesterday," kept his soul humble as some "thorn in the flesh"? Food for thought.

(2) ". . . *a messenger of Satan. . .*" -- Whatever this "thorn in the flesh" was, if not handled properly, could have consumed and destroyed this great man of God in that it was a tool of the devil.

(3) ". . . *to buffet me . . .*" -- "The present tense of the verb . . . seems to imply that the trouble was permanent. The word itself, 'kolaphizo, means literally 'to strike a blow with a fist,' and so 'to maltreat' especially in such a matter that shame and indignation are felt by the sufferer" (R.V.G. Tasker, The Second Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians, p. 177).

(4) ". . . *concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice . . .*" -- Paul's word "besought" is the same word translated "Comforter" in the words of Jesus to his apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). He pled for comfort. He pled that the strain of his inner turmoil might ease. By the way, his praying for this three times reminds us of someone else doesn't it -- Jesus in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45)?

(5) ". . . *and he hath said unto me, my grace is*

sufficient for thee . . ." -- The term "he hath said," are found in what is called the perfect tense, denoting a past statement with continued results. Here's the idea: once and for all, Jesus made this statement and every time Paul wrestled with his problem, his heart was stilled by these words burning in his memory! What words? "My grace is sufficient!" Would it not be wonderful if we all adopted those words as the model for our days?!

(6) ". . . *most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . .*" -- Two words occur repeatedly in this context: "glory" (verses 1, 5, 6) and "weakness" or "weak" (verses 5, 9, 10). Paul refused to glory in life because he had been humbled by his weaknesses and learned to trust in Jesus to deal with them.

Conclusion

Isn't it great to serve a God who is powerful and personal enough to care (Job 37:5; Psalms 145:3; 147:5)?! The very thought of his transcendence and tenderness is enough to humble our souls and put life in perspective!

--2159 Beltline Road, SW, Decatur, AL 35601.

Today And Time

(Author Unknown)

TODAY is here. I will start with a smile and resolve to be agreeable. I will not criticize. I refuse to waste my valuable time.

TODAY is one thing I know I am equal with all others -- time. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes and hours.

TODAY I will not waste my time because the minutes I wasted yesterday are as lost as a vanished thought.

TODAY I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen . . . it usually doesn't. I am going to spend time making things happen.

TODAY I am determined to study to improve myself, for tomorrow, I may be wanted and I must not be found lacking.

TODAY I am determined to do the things that I

should do. I firmly determine to stop doing the things I should not do.

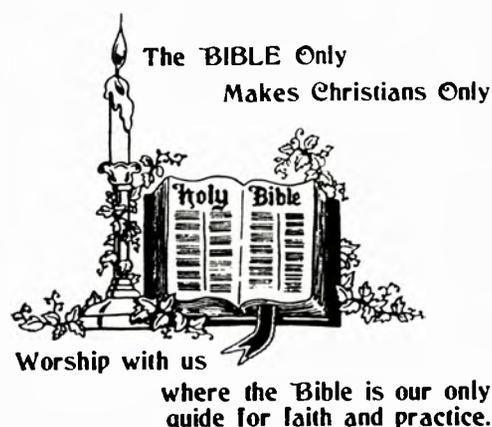
TODAY I begin by doing and not wasting my time. In one week I will be miles beyond the person I am today.

TODAY I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different. I will make success with what material I have.

TODAY I will stop saying "If I had time." I know I never will "find time" for anything. If I want time I must make it.

TODAY I will act toward other people as though this might be my last day on earth. I will not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes.

--Via BULLETIN 2502 Florence Blvd., Florence, AL 35630.



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VOLUME 28

JANUARY 10, 1992

NUMBER 2

Three Words For A New Year



R. W. Gray

We are encouraged to love life and to see good days (I Peter 3:10).

Written into the foundation laws of our society is the affirmation of the right of all to seek the ultimate good, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

God's chosen have received many new things. We came to him by means of the new birth (John 3:3-5). When we were baptized into Christ we became "new creatures" (II Corinthians 5:17). God then gave us a new name, a new song, a new hope, a new assignment, a new position, a new purpose for living, and promise of a new home (Revelation 21:5).

At this time in our relationship in him we are given another New Year. Challenges and hopes of the past year did not find full fruition. And into the life of some great tragedy came. But we now have another year with all the hopes and dreams such a time provides.

If we would renew our strength, revive our hopes, and secure the happiness sought in the New Year there are three words, all beginning with the same letter, that will provide greater assurance that God will be with us to fulfill his promises to his loved and own (II Peter 1:4).

In a sober and reflective manner we should look at our first word; a word that reminds us that this could be the last year of our lives on earth. The word is "REMEMBER!" There are certain things God admonishes us to keep in view. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and FORGET NOT all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2). And we just must remember that in the hand of God is every living

soul, including our own (Job 12:10).

Entering a New Year we must remember that God rewards his faithful children and that he punishes those who turn from him. Whatever our productivity may have been in the past the Lord has granted another opportunity to bring forth fruit to his glory (Matthew 5:16).

Jesus said, "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, 'Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and found none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' And he answering said unto him, 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down'" (Luke 13:6-9).

May we not forget that God has given us the beginning of another year wherein we may bear fruit for his name, another year wherein we may use our talents for his glory. We must remember that the tree that bears no fruit he will cut down, cast into the fire, and it will be burned (John 15:1-4).

The next word that will bring us into closer relationship with God in 1992 is the word, "REPENT!" This was required of us in our initial obedience and must be a part of our very lives (Acts 2:38). The command to repent is often found in the context wherein God admonishes his own people (Acts 8:22).

Reviewing the past, whether the overt acts of disobedience, or those of simple neglect, we find many regrets. The best of his followers, among them the apostle Peter, make their mistakes and must come to a point of regret and repentance. In that repentance be rid of any residue of wrong dispositions and attitudes that held us back in the years past and gone.

Having repented of past wrongs let us, like Paul, forget those things that are behind (Philippians 3:13-14). When God sees a penitent heart and observes the fruits thereof he puts that sin away forever, and so should we (Acts 3:19; Psalm

103:12).

Another word essential to genuine happiness and success is the word "RESOLVE!" This brings us to those annual resolutions we find much easier to break than are old habits. Having repented of past mistakes we must fill our lives with worthwhile aims and purposes. No one is happy who does not seek the pleasure of God and who does not resolve in his or her heart to follow it.

David resolved, "I will keep thy statutes." "I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways." "I will not forget thy word." "I will keep thy law, yea, I will observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119). Much energy was spent in the year past seeking creature comforts. Far too little was reserved for the study of God's word and in seeking the lost. Now that we repent of this lack may we resolve that we seek those souls this year we had on our list for 1991. The Lord said, "Go!" We have said, "Come!" Jesus came to "seek" and to "save." We need not ask the Lord to lead us to some soul today unless we are ready to seek the lost.

We are warned, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for the Lord will surely require it of thee" (Deuteronomy 23:21). And again, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Ecclesiastes 5:5). While we must look to the future and not dwell upon the past to our hurt and discouragement, we must be careful to take those resolves as seriously as does the God before whom they are made. Resolve that God will be in every decision for this year. "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 that ye ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that'" (James 4:13-15).

May we find that happiness that is found only in the Lord and in his service.

--563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.



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Sin



Eva Nell B. Naramore

Sin is a willful act of doing wrong, going against God's will, whatever the offence or fault may be. Since the time of Adam and Eve, in the garden, and Cain who slew his brother Abel, we read of good and evil. In the Old Testament God gave the commandments for people to abide by, to do good. But because of the pleasures of sin, many went against his will. By faith Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Hebrews 11:24-25).

God gave us his word, (Genesis through Revelation) that we may know the difference between good and evil. With study, and with conscience we have knowledge of right and wrong. Therefore, we have control of our thoughts and are responsible for our decisions to sin, or not to sin.

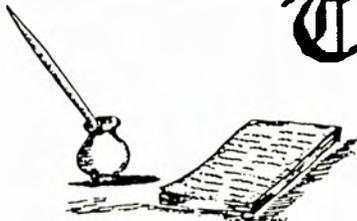
Life is filled with problems because of sin. Prisons are crowded with people, young and old, because of murder, drunkenness, theft and many other sins. Children are left in need of love, food, clothes and the teaching of God's word, that they may know how to turn away from the pitfall of sin, and learn to choose right, making for themselves a better life. Sin is bringing sorrow to so many.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). We are to hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized as God has commanded that we may have hope. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade



Myths About Suicide



David Wade

There are many mistaken ideas about suicide. Consider the following:

1) Suicide and attempted suicide are in the same class of behavior. Not so! A suicide attempt may be a cry for help rather than an effort to take one's life.

2) Suicide is a problem of a specific class of people. Not so! The incidence of suicide cuts across all races and nationalities, religious backgrounds, social and economic strata. It has been observed that among some classes of people the suicide rate is lower. However, no class of people is left untouched by suicide.

3) People who talk about suicide do not commit suicide. Not so! Not everyone who talks about suicide commits suicide, but on the other hand, the person who gives a suicidal hint or threat should be taken seriously. Personal and professional help should be sought for them.

4) Once a person is suicidal he is always suicidal. Not so! We would probably be surprised if we knew the percentage of people everywhere who, at one time or another, had entertained the thought of suicide. The vast majority of such people do not involve themselves in suicidal activity such as gathering the means to do it. The suicidal often find new ways of coping and live to face new challenges and opportunities. The Philippian jailor

is an example.

5) Suicide is inherited and runs in families. Not so! When the incidence of suicide riddles a particular family, it is the exception and not the rule. There has been no biological connection demonstrated in the incidence of suicide.

6) If a person is a Christian he will not commit suicide. Not so! The Lord's church is affected about equally with other religious and non religious groups.

7) Suicide and depression are synonymous. Not so! While it may be demonstrated that most suicide victims are depressed, not all depressed people commit suicide. It is a fact of life that all people are at times affected by some level of depression, whether mild or severe. It does not follow that all people are suicidal.

8) Improvement after a suicidal crisis means that the risk of suicide is over. Not so! Only a small percent of people are successful at the first attempt. Because a person is perceived to be doing better is no guarantee that the symptoms cannot return.

There were over 30,000 suicides in the United States in 1991. This time of year, with shortened days, and immediately after the holidays, is an especially crucial time for some who are contemplating suicide.

It behooves us to educate ourselves as best we can on this subject. The person who most often is available to give help on the spur of the moment, is not the trained professional, but rather a friend or acquaintance.

The Scorpion And The Frog



John Gipson

"Please take me across the river on your back." "You are crazy," says the frog, "you would sting me and I would drown." "It's you who's crazy," says the scorpion. "If I stung you when you were taking me across the river on your back, I should drown too." So the frog is persuaded, and the scorpion climbs on his back and off they go. Halfway across the river, the scorpion stings the frog. As they are both drowning, sinking down to the river bed, the frog asks, "But why?" And the scorpion says, "Because it is my nature."

That little story reminds me that I can't afford to trust the Devil. He's a liar and a deceiver. In the book of Revelation I see the great dragon being

thrown down, "that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). He can't help but deceive. It is his nature. Look at him at work in the garden of Eden. When God asked Eve what she had done, the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13). If we go back to the first verse of Genesis 3, we will learn that "the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made." The apostle Paul takes it up in II Corinthians 11:3 by saying, "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ." In Ephesians 4:22 he urges, "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts." The letter to the

Continued On Page 3

"That He May Run That Readeth It"



Bobby Duncan

In Habakkuk 2:2 the Lord told his prophet: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." This probably means the writing is to be so plain that one running past might be able to read it without even slowing down. Herein lies a lesson for those

of us who teach and preach. Our teaching should be plain enough to be understood without any difficulty. It is a tragic mistake to couch truth essential to man's salvation in language that is difficult to understand.

The teaching done by Jesus while he was on earth was easily understood. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Is there anything hard to understand about that? "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Is that plain enough? "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). Any question about the necessity of confessing Jesus before men? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Is that not plain enough for one to read and understand while running? If Jesus used language that plain and simple in his teaching, why should his preachers hide the truth in obscure words and phrases?

The message Habakkuk was to write so plainly it might be read by one who was running had to do with a condemnation of sin. God's man never has a right to be ugly or rude in dealing with others, even with those who are guilty of sin. But it is his duty to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2). This also should be done in language so plain "that he may run that readeth it."

Some preach, the truth, and nothing but the truth, but neglect to preach any truth that is unpleasant for their hearers to hear. This kind of preaching brings them great popularity, but is not after the apostolic order. It leaves people satisfied in sin, without any desire to do any better than they are doing.

One other thing needs to be said about the teaching and preaching that is sometimes done. It is possible for one to teach the truth, and teach it plainly, without his teaching's being acceptable to God. In Acts 20:20 Paul told the Ephesian elders that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable" unto them. In verse 27 he said: "I have not shunned

to declare unto you all the counsel of God." One may preach the truth, nothing but the truth, and no error at all, and still not be a faithful preacher. Some preach, the truth, and nothing but the truth, but neglect to preach any truth that is unpleasant for their hearers to hear. This kind of preaching brings them great popularity, but is not after the apostolic order. It leaves people satisfied in sin, without any desire to do any better than they are doing.

All who preach or teach should determine to teach the truth, all the truth, and that so plainly "that he may run that readeth it."

--2805 Madison Street, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Sin

Continued From Page 2

should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Good understanding giveth favor, but the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15). "The works of the flesh are manifest which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like. . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). ". . . Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow . . ." (Isaiah 1:18).

God can cleanse us of our iniquities, ". . . he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

The following is a poem I wrote about sin.

The Web Of Sin

To you who weave the web of sin, and lock yourself from freedom in, There is a web of no return, Before too late, I hope you learn.

Some webs enticing to the eye, Where few escape, because few try, When tossed and turned, may fall apart, To leave another broken heart.

While clinging to the webs of sin, Webs that glitter in the wind. Like sparkling diamonds in the frost, The soul of many is the cost.

Too blind to find the right way out, For those who live in sin and doubt. What in this tangled, sinful life, Can you expect but tears and strife.

Don't let the spider trim your wings, Fly while you can, to better things, With love for good, and what is right, There comes sweet peace and rest at night.

Awake and see the early dawn, Get busy, free yourself, come on, You can be free, there is a way, Climb from that web, Climb out today.

Weave your own web, with good to show, your work of art, let others know, Then in your parlor you can rest, Relaxed with loved ones as your guest.

--Route 2, Box 95, Oakman, AL 35579.

The Scorpion And The Frog

Continued From Page 2

Hebrews says, "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

Never has this element of "deceitfulness" been more manifest than at the present time. If we are not careful we will be taken in by that which seems to offer hope. For example, Paul used the Law unlawfully and discovered, "the very

commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me" (Romans 7:10, 11).

Before we believe everything we hear, it might be well to look at the nature of the one who is talking. If we don't we are going to be deceived, deluded, beguiled and mislead.

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Second Annual Ladies Day

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

Theme: "The Aroma Of Christ"

Speaker: Pam Bucy - Nashville, Tennessee

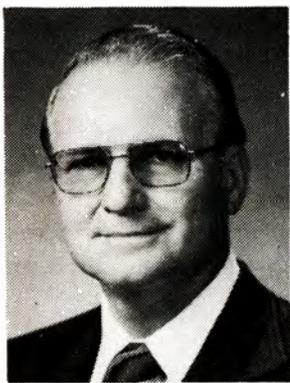
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Date: Saturday, February 1, 1992

Attended Nursery, Lunch will be served

All Ladies ARE INVITED!

Suicide



Bobby Key

The jailor in Philippi awakened to find the prison doors opened. He drew his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled (Acts 16:27). This is not the only person who came close to taking his own life. One of the major social problems of our day is suicide.

Suicide is self-murder. Each year over 25,000 Americans commit suicide -- 55 per day. Authorities confess that 50,000 other deaths might be attributed to suicide, but cannot be proven.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in our nation. It is the fourth leading killer of teen-agers, and the number two cause of death among college students. Well over 1,000 persons take their own life each day around the world. This would amount to more than three million every year.

All kinds of people, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, high and low in society, commit suicide. No category is exempt. Even though only about one in ten of those who attempt suicide are actually successful, it is a myth to believe that those who talk about suicide will never take their own life. Studies show that 80% of those who threaten suicide will eventually do so.

Sociologists have noted that suicidal tendencies are not inherited. Their studies reveal suicide to be highest among Protestants, and Jews have a lower suicide rate than Catholics. This problem is seldom discussed among us, but nevertheless is prevalent and serious. I have been called on to preach the funeral service for a number of suicide victims.

There are six recorded cases of suicide in the Bible: Samson (Judges 16:30), King Saul and his armor-bearer (I Samuel 31), Ahithophel (II Samuel 17:23), Zimri (I Kings 16:18), and Judas (Matthew 27:4, 5).

Many reasons may be given for one's taking his own life. Some important personalities, who are found guilty of dishonesty or disloyalty, choose death rather than shame and humiliation. Some are filled with remorse and despair, leading to serious depression. Sometimes a person takes his own life in an effort to punish another, hoping to make him feel guilty. Adolescent children have been known to do this to their parents. Aged parents may also follow this route, and partners in an unhappy marriage have been guilty of this crime. Others feel unable to cope with their problems, and come to the conclusion that life is not worth living. Still others are just lonely and dread what the future may hold. We live in a pressure packed society, and stress drives many to extremes.

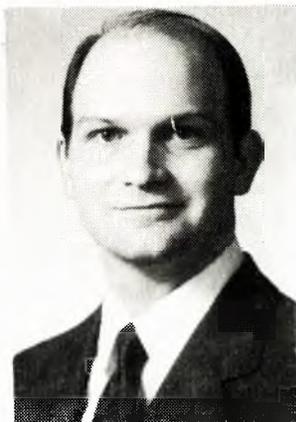
"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13, Romans 13:9). When one kills himself, he has committed a sin of which he cannot repent. Suicide is self-murder, and the very nature of the deed makes it impossible to repent and ask forgiveness. One who takes his own life shows a lack of trust and

confidence in God. The suicide victim treats life, a priceless gift of God, as if it were worthless.

Suicide is self-murder, and the very nature of the deed makes it impossible to repent and ask forgiveness. One who takes his own life shows a lack of trust and confidence in God.

It has always appeared to me that the suicide victim is selfish. He shows no consideration for those who are left behind. In every case, suicide is a selfish decision which does not take into account the pain of the survivors. Family members often spend years after the event scrubbing blood out of their memories, and talking of a ghost member of the family who left them with nothing but emptiness. In many ways, suicide is the ultimate injustice to family and friends. The potential suicide victim should ask himself whether or not he would like to be the one left behind.

Survivors are left to endure the shame, the sorrow, and even the guilt, and there is always anger to deal with. The nagging question, "Why?" will hang around for years. The death of a loved one usually brings some of these feelings anyway,



Dalton Key

Sometime back, in a church in another state, an elder stomped out of a business meeting muttering, "I never get my way about anything!" He never came back to another meeting. In fact, he never set foot in that church building again. His pride got hurt. He wanted his own way.

A worthwhile project is started and gains the support of most everyone in the church. Everyone, that is, except for a few grumblers. They are upset, they say, because it won't work, or because it isn't being handled properly, or because the timing is wrong. If truth were known, they are really upset because they didn't think of it and aren't leading. If they can't be the leaders, the "mainest ones," they'll take their marbles and go home. And so they organize opposition. At least they can lead in the opposition! They want things to go their way.

A weak member is slighted, either intentionally or unintentionally, by another member. He cries, "foul!" He cries on the shoulders of all who will lend an ear. He persuades others to join him in harboring a grudge against the wrongdoer. He refuses to speak to the one who slighted him. He stops attending services where the "slighter" attends, because he can't stand to worship with such a villain! His rights have been violated and he knows it. He wants his own way.

Is this Christianity? Is this the spirit of which Paul wrote when he taught, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God?" (Ephesians 5:21). Is this the golden rule in action? (Matthew 7:12). We think not. Remember, "Let all your things be done with love" (I

but death by suicide multiplies them many times over.

Things are seldom as bad as they seem. No matter how heavy the burden, how dark the night, nor how intense the pain, let us never even entertain the thought of suicide. God will not forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). King David said, "When my father and mother forsake me, then God will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). Let us learn to accept our lot in life. God has a purpose for our being, and expects us to be faithful. If depression becomes a problem, talk to a friend and, by all means, seek help. Suicide has never solved any problem.

We have the tendency to place the blame on society, while taking away individual responsibility. However, God's law states that every man must bear his own burden and answer for his own actions. Most people become depressed from time to time, yet the majority do not attempt suicide.

The suicide destroys his body, which is not his own (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). He violates the commandment, "Thou shalt not murder." Suicide is pre-meditated self-murder (Exodus 20:7, Matthew 19:18). God's help in time of trouble is refused (Psalm 50:15), and eternal life is forfeited (I John 3:15). Suicide is always the wrong way out.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

I Never Get My Way!

Corinthians 16:14).

We were not reborn in Christ in order to feed the flames of our own egos. We were not sanctified -- set apart -- to the end of fulfilling our own selfish whims and desires. Our calling in Christ was not to self-gratification, but to self-denial. We must never forget that we are the servants, not the served.

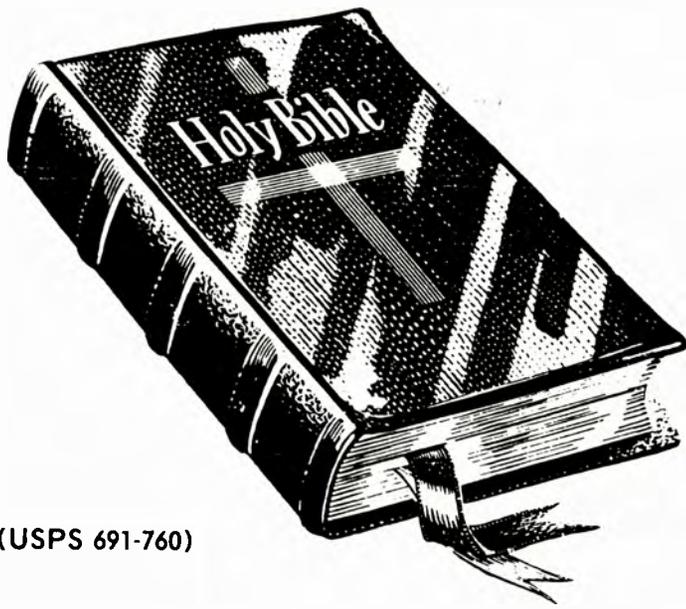
The apostle Paul has left us a wonderful example in this regard. He explained to the Corinthian brethren how he had gone without financial support from them, now he had thus suffered "all things, lest," as he said, "we should hinder the gospel of Christ" (I Corinthians 9:12). Again, in this same chapter, he continues, "And this I do for the gospel's sake" (verse 23). Paul would not allow his own personal comforts and needs to in any way detract from the greater cause -- the growth of the body through the furtherance of the gospel.

And yet some lessons are more difficult to learn than others. The lesson of mutual submission, as taught in Ephesians 5:21, is especially difficult. We want our own way, to have things done our own way. We expect others to adjust themselves to our schedule; to think, talk and react as we do; in short, to dance to our tune.

"The body is not one member, but many" (I Corinthians 12:14). The sooner we realize that we are not the only ones in a congregation (that we are not even the most important ones), the better -- for us, for the congregation involved, and for the Lord's work in general. Few things will suffocate a local work as quickly and completely as wide-scale selfishness and "my-wayism."

May we, as Paul, "suffer all things," if needs be, "for the gospel's sake."

--Box 563, Liberal, Kansas 67901.



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Word of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Friends,
Words of Truth and soberness.

Take forth the

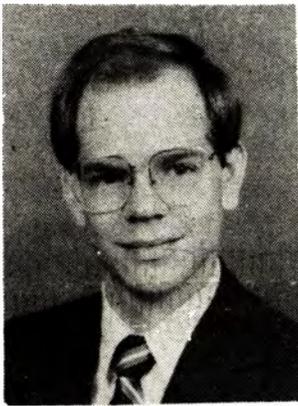
—Acts 26:25

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Did Jesus Really Live?



Brad T. Bromling

National attention was recently drawn to a small, but vocal group of self-proclaimed atheists in McDonough, Georgia. They brashly displayed a large banner which bore this bold inscription: "JESUS CHRIST IS A MYTH." Surprisingly, the McDonough City Council ruled that the sign was obscene.

The question may linger, however, in the minds of some, as to whether the atheists were right. Is Jesus Christ simply a mythical character? Is He a figment conjured up in the minds of some first century religious fanatics? If this charge is true, Christianity is a sham, and man is utterly alone in this dark world. Are the atheists right? Absolutely not! Jesus' existence is historically verifiable. Information regarding the Lord's historicity comes from Jewish, Christian, and Roman writings.

Of the Jewish sources, Flavius Josephus (a historian who lived in the first century) is prominent (but not alone). He made at least two references to Jesus Christ. An Arabic version of his writings dating back to about the fourth century contains this reference: "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders" (quoted in: *Ancient Evidence for the Life of Jesus*, by Gary Habermas, pp 91-92). Josephus' references are significant since he was no friend of Christianity (hence, a hostile witness).

Christian sources are abundant. Many of these are books in the New Testament -- of which Jesus Christ is the central theme. Atheists and skeptics may attempt to dismiss these writings out-of-hand, but their historicity can be defended convincingly. First, it is important to remember that most of the New Testament books were in circulation within forty years of Jesus' resurrection. Hence, the things written could have been challenged by those who knew the facts. Second, some of the currently extant manuscripts of these writings reach back to the second century. This space of time (between the original writing and when the copies which still exist were made) is very short when compared to most ancient writings. For example, in the case of the writings of Aristotle, Herodotus, and Thucydides there is a gap greater than a thousand years between the originals and the extant copies. Yet, no one doubts that these men lived. Third, while a historian normally must rely upon only a handful of manuscripts for most ancient documents, the New Testament scholar has **thousands** of extant manuscripts from which to work! The sheer number is unparalleled in ancient literature. Fourth, the New Testament documents give us no reason to doubt their historical accuracy. Every "checkable" fact in these books "checks out" with history. Yes, the New Testament is a **legitimate and credible** witness to the reality of Jesus Christ.

Far from being a fantasy of fanatics, Jesus Christ is undeniably a figure of history.

The real thorn in the atheist's side is the mention of Jesus in secular Roman sources. That a religious teacher (who died at a young age) from a small, despised country called Judea should be mentioned in Roman documents is a wonder in itself. An obscure carpenter with few friends from a remote town, would hardly make front-page news in the

capital city of the world! Even His death was unremarkable in that age of extreme cruelty and gladiatorial "games." Nonetheless, some references are made to Jesus.

Most notably, Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman historian who lived during the last half of the first century, mentioned Jesus Christ and His followers. He had this to say regarding Nero's attempts to avoid personal blame for the burning of Rome: "Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians. Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate . . ." (quoted in: *He Walked Among Us*, by Josh McDowell, p 49). Later in this same passage, Tacitus went on to mention the horrid forms of mockery and execution suffered by Christians for their faith. Remember, this persecution occurred only about 31 years from the death of Christ. These pious people obviously believed that Jesus was much more than a mythical Messiah.

Far from being a fantasy of fanatics, Jesus Christ is undeniably a figure of history. He is mentioned by friend and foe alike. His teachings have shaped and molded Western thought and civilization like those of no mere man. Clearly, it is only the uninformed or dishonest person who denies the historicity of Jesus Christ.

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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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Are Gospel Meetings Dead?



David Wade

We are approaching the time of year when many congregations of the Lord's church hold their traditional spring gospel meetings. While many congregations would not dare forsake this time-honored tradition, there are some who have ceased having gospel meetings, accounting

them as worthless, out of date, and out of touch with today's needs.

Specialized seminars, lectureships, workshops, involvement and outreach programs certainly have their place in the work of the church. However, I am not convinced that any, or all of these, have made the gospel meeting or revival obsolete. The First Century church did not consider gospel meetings worthless. The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine on a daily basis (Acts 2:42, 46). The word of God was preached (Acts 8:5; 13:5). The whole counsel of God was shared (Acts 20:7). Their services were known to be both edifying and evangelistic (I Corinthians 14:23-26). Souls were saved and members were strengthened through the preaching of the Word (Acts 2:41, 47; 18:23). They were

urgent in their work whether it was considered to be in season or out of season (II Timothy 4:2).

When the word was preached, their numbers grew and as individuals grew in faith, the word of God also grew in its influence in society. "And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly" (Acts 6:7). "But the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20).

Gospel meetings are not dead, rather, meetings where no gospel is preached are dead. Also, meetings held in dead churches where members do not support the gospel, nor attend, nor invite the lost, are dead. The gospel is never dead! It is alive and powerful! (Hebrews 4:12).

If you think gospel meetings are dead, look again. Look around and you will find some congregations who have very effective gospel meetings. They plan the work and work the plan. They pray, work, invite, attend, and support the effort. They plant, they water, and God gives the increase (I Corinthians 3:6); and how can God give the increase, if we don't plant and water?

Those who charge that gospel meetings are dead only indict themselves. "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation" (Psalm 85:6-7).

"I Purpose To Give"

Here in America, Christians enjoy an unusual amount of freedom. God has given us a wonderful opportunity to use this freedom for the advancement of His kingdom. But we often fail because we do not have the necessary funds by which to do that which opportunity affords. WHY?

The significant fact is that we do not purpose to give, and then carry out that purpose as we should. It is important that we purpose in our hearts to give. "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give" (II Corinthians 9:7). Our giving is not rightly done unless we so purpose.

When we receive our pay, our first purpose should be to lay aside our proper contribution. To hold back with a "wait and see" attitude is to thwart the purpose. Go ahead and give! God is able to take care of His people.

The individual Christian who plans his giving and carries out his heart's purpose will be abundantly blessed -- "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you" (II Corinthians 9:8). Fear not to do that which God requires you to do: for only that you might fail to do that which He requires.

--Selected

Once More Around The Sun

Norman Gibson

Since God created the worlds, the journey of the earth around the sun has marked the year. Every day we should be reminded of the passing time; but we usually think more seriously of it as a new year begins.

However well we have used the past year, none

of us is fully satisfied with it. The restlessness of the soul of man, away from God and Home, urges man on. The Christian says with Paul, "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forth to the things which are before, I

Brotherly Love



Bobby Key

It was in the very shadow of the cross, the setting was the last supper, Jesus taught the eleven disciples, (Judas had already gone out into the night). The following words fell from the Master's lips: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that

ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35).

Christ made love the badge of discipleship. "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes" (I John 2:9-11).

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7-8).

Surely it is not possible that our hearts are left hard and untouched by these tender words of scripture! "Owe no man anything save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8).

Brotherly love is expressed in forgiveness. One does not live long in this world without sinning against another. Jesus said, "Take heed to yourself: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). Restoration of the

Continued On Page 3

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Once More Around The Sun

Continued From Page 2

press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:13-14). Sometimes we are hurt by looking back -- but so was Paul. His poignant words to a king reveal the pain: "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus . . . And this I also did . . . shut up many saints in prison . . . gave my vote against them . . . strove to make them blaspheme" (see Acts 26:8-11). Paul says in effect, "I know how you feel: I was away from God; but I changed, and so can you!"

Then how could Paul claim to be "forgetting the things that are behind"? Simply this: he did not allow the past to prevent his living for God in the present, and preparing to do so in the future. We

may find it impossible to wipe out the full memory of past wrongs; but we can turn from them and bring the full power of a consecrated life to bear on present duties!

We may find it impossible to wipe out the full memory of past wrongs; but we can turn from them and bring the full power of a consecrated life to bear on present duties!

"I count not myself to have laid hold . . ." This is not a complaint against the Lord, but the driving passion of a soul dedicated to God! Let us so dedicate ourselves.

"But one thing I do . . ." Paul pressed on. Peter set a bad example for him, but Paul pressed on. All those in Asia turned away from him, but Paul pressed on. Demas forsook him; no man stood with him in his hour of severe trial, but Paul pressed on. Paul despaired even of life, but he pressed on. And so can we!

Paul could press on because these present sufferings will end in glory -- a "prize" was waiting, not an empty future. He looked to the goal, and set his heart on Christ. Whatever this year has brought to you, you can do the same if you will.

As the old year dies, let us thank God through Christ for all that He has given: for each battle fought, each temptation overcome, every awareness of grace now and glory yet to come. And let us press on! For with the child of God it is true of each day as it is of each year,

"LO, GOD HATH GIVEN THEE ANOTHER PAGE."

--Via Keynoter, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Brotherly Love

Continued From Page 2

offender and reconciliation with the offended are included in forgiveness. Study Matthew 18:15-17 carefully. What tragic dissensions and church-splits could have been avoided had brethren followed the teaching of Christ. How long have brethren carried on their bitter quarrels, which never could have lasted had they listened to the words of Jesus.

What tragic dissensions and church-splits could have been avoided had brethren followed the teaching of Christ.

Let us be careful to pray for our brother. When your brother sins don't be so quick to write him off. "Brethren, if any 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. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2). Many of our brethren are babes in Christ, they are deficient in knowledge and weak in the faith. These brethren are in need of our patience, understanding and teaching. They certainly must not be neglected and ignored.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called that ye should inherit a blessing" (I Peter 3:8-9).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Keeping Your Promises

Kenneth McClain

There are many people who are quick to make a promise but slow to keep it. This is especially true in any volunteer organization. In the business world we know that we must perform in order to see a check at the end of the week. Not likely will your employer pay you for just thinking about work or having good intentions about the work.

Jesus tells of "A certain man who had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not (Matthew 21:28-30). We have too many members of the church, I am afraid, who are like the second son. They are quick to make promises, but slow to carry them out. Perhaps some may be sincere at the time they make the promise to serve God faithfully all the days of their lives; however, it is obedience that proves our faithfulness to God (James 2:26). Some may be like the man in James 1:22-24 who knew what he should do but "goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

We have church members who say that they are

concerned with lost souls and promise that some day they will start teaching the lost the gospel of Christ. It is not enough to say that we are interested in lost souls, we must show it.

For any congregation of God's people to grow and carry out the work that God would have it do, it must have members who promise to work, and keep their promises -- and for those who say "I will not" to repent and go to work.

For any congregation of God's people to grow and carry out the work that God would have it do, it must have members who promise to work, and keep their promises -- and for those who say "I will not" to repent and go to work. The church will not grow on just promises and good intentions. Work must be done!

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46203.

BIBLE VERSE

**Blessed is the man that
endureth temptation: for when
he is tried, he shall receive the
crown of life,
which the Lord hath promised
to them that love him.**

James 1:12

The Secret Of An Evangelistic Spirit



Bobby Duncan

It is generally believed that the fifty-first Psalm was written by a very penitent David after the sins he committed in connection with Bathsheba. In verses 12 and 13 the writer of the psalm said: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." These words contain what seems most likely to be the very key to having an evangelistic spirit. If one has been saved by the marvelous grace and mercy of God, and has a joyful appreciation of his salvation, then he will, like the psalmist, want to do everything within his power to bring others to enjoy this salvation.

We live in a time when we have so many modern gadgets to make our lives easier for us. Computers and machines enable us to do so much more than our parents could do. In fact, if it can't be done by a computer or a machine, many choose simply to

leave it undone. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we are not converting more people to Christ. It can't be done by means of computers and machines; it still has to be done the old way -- by patiently and painfully teaching sinners the ways of God as revealed in the Bible.

But this is no problem, if we truly have the joy of the salvation God has provided for us. How can one have an understanding of the greatness of his salvation from sin and not be exceedingly thankful for the marvelous price paid for that salvation? And how can one who is truly thankful for the price paid for his salvation be content not to be actively involved in trying to bring others to a knowledge of the truth? There is only one logical conclusion one can reach: If one who has been forgiven of his sins is not interested in converting sinners, then his own salvation from sin means very little to him. The psalmist said: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation . . . and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

What can you do to convert sinners? Invite them to attend services with you. Make an appointment with them to study the Bible with you or someone else. Give them some good literature. Show some

genuine interest in them personally. Introduce them to other members of the church. Practice hospitality toward them. Encourage them to study the Bible and to ask questions.

If one who has been forgiven of his sins is not interested in converting sinners, then his own salvation from sin means very little to him.

Someone (I don't know who) has written the following very appropriate lines:

Just one life;
Twill soon be past.
Only what's done
For Christ will last.

--2805 Madison Street, Adamsville, AL 35005.

The Sin Of Uselessness



Charles N. Crump

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

James portrays in an individual one who is acquainted with his duty, but does not do it. The Bible makes clear this foundation as Jesus says, "and everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto

a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand . . . and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:26-27).

Many in the church today rely upon their knowledge of truth and somehow draw from it a complacency so far as useful and worthwhile service is concerned. They know but do not do! They read but do not heed!

Judgment will be administered on the basis of our own personal opportunity. Jesus wrought many mighty works in the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matthew 11:21-22), he began to rebuke the cities when they would not believe and repent. As our knowledge of the Lords will increase, the weightier our responsibilities become to perform. There is a tremendous responsibility on those who hear two or more sermons per week, having opportunity to attend Bible classes regularly and unlimited opportunity to study their Bibles at

home. In view of our opportunities, to what extent has this influenced our lives? How much of it have we been able to put into useful service? Are we more active in our service today than yesterday because of our increased knowledge?

The devil has deceived many in the church to believe knowledge is everything separate and apart from the performing of it. This is why the Lord has given us several "judgment parables," the barren fig tree (Mark 11:13), the talents (Matthew 25), rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16), the two builders (Matthew 7) and others. For some unscriptural reason many think as long as "I do no evil, I'm free from sin and I'm therefore acceptable to God." One must realize there are two sides in serving the Lord. There is the "thou shalt" as well as the "thou shalt not." Sins of omission (failing to do) will condemn as quickly as sins of commission. One must not only be good but he must do good. "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Seldom, or never, do we ask, "what is it I have failed to do,?" such as visiting the sick, involving myself in personal work and edifying the church.

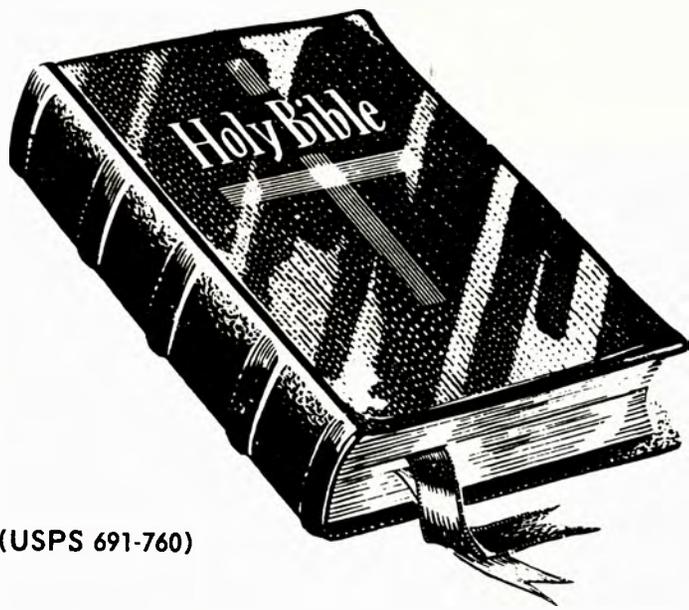
Many in the church look upon themselves as harmless as long as they keep the "thou shalt not." The judgment parable of Matthew 21:17-19 expresses well the sinfulness of uselessness in serving God. The barren fig tree was not producing poisonous fruit, nor foul odor to man. It was neither harmful to man or beast. The tree at this stage was to have fruit but it did not thus bringing

on the destruction of it. We could say the tree was harmless but for us to see the Lord's detest for uselessness, he cursed it so that it died. It only pretended in appearance to produce fruit. Pretence leads others to think more is being done than really is, thus it is nothing short of hypocrisy.

Those who pride themselves on the things they do not do will surely be disappointed at the last day.

The one talent man is described as being wicked and unprofitable (Matthew 25:14-30). No doubt this man had many good qualities. There is no evidence he was a criminal. He did not steal the talent nor did he neglect it, matter of fact, he cared for it by hiding it. Yet he is described as a wicked man -- a brilliant example of a harmless man. He simply did as many in the church are doing today, failing to bear fruits by not doing the "thou shalt." Are you a harmless member and committing the sin of uselessness? Those who pride themselves on the things they do not do will surely be disappointed at the last day.

--P.O. Box 176, Hackleburg, AL 35564.



(USPS 691-760)

Word Of Truth

Of

"I am not mad, most noble*Fes
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the
Acts 26:25

VOLUME 28

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NUMBER 4

"Magic" Played With Fire . . . And He Lost!



Don Williams

The news out of Los Angeles was startling -- Ervin "Magic" Johnson was announcing his retirement from professional basketball. The reason -- the thirty-two year old star had tested positive with the human immuno-deficiency virus, better known as HIV. This is the virus that causes

AIDS. Johnson joins over one million other Americans who have this same virus.

Other individuals of "note" had also acquired HIV and then developed AIDS. Men like Rock Hudson and Liberace, of the "Hollywood" era, died of this disease, with their cases being well-documented. But now, for the first time in the sports world, a "big name" star had announced that he had the virus. "Magic," the man who had led the LA Lakers to the Championship Finals nine out of twelve years -- he who had led them to five NBA Championship Finals nine out of twelve years -- he who had led them to five NBA Championships, was stepping down. And why-not because he did not love the game anymore -- nor was it that some career ending physical injury had taken place -- but because he had developed HIV through heterosexual contact before marriage. Magic played with fire, and he got burned.

His admission to this virus turns the spotlight on the grim facts of AIDS. Consider these:

As of September 30, 1991, there have been 195,718 cases of AIDS in the U.S.

As of September 30, 1991, there have been 126,159 deaths of AIDS patients, since the epidemic began in 1981.

In Alabama, as of October 25, 1991, 1162 adults and 30 children have tested positive with HIV. Out of these cases, 724 have died.

Consider, if you will, the contrast between what Magic has done and what Pete Rose did. Rose committed the "unpardonable sin" by betting and

gambling on baseball games, perhaps even on his own team, at times. For this, he has been banned from baseball, and popular thinking is that he will never be inducted into the Hall of Fame because of his actions. Meanwhile, Magic has been held in high repute and the thinking would be by some that he would be a "shoo-in" to the Basketball Hall of Fame. I understand that the value of his rookie basketball card has doubled in only a few days time. Yet, he too gambled -- he gambled with his own personal life in regards to immorality -- and he lost. He may have done much for basketball as Rose did for baseball, but neither are heroes that teens or adults should try to emulate and exalt.

Now, Ervin Johnson says that he wants to be spokesman on behalf of the HIV virus. In his words, he wants to warn teens to use safety in their sexual relations with each other. Pardon me Magic, but I do not want you teaching my boys anything. I do not want you to suggest, by personal example and by what you teach, that immorality is acceptable, as long as you do not get infected. God calls it sin (I Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 5:19). I

do not want you teaching teens who I know and love that safety and carefulness is what one must remember, not abstinence. I do not want you to cheapen and make acceptable and easy what God has referred to as beautiful and undefiled, only within the context of husband and wife (Hebrews 13:4).

Pardon me Magic, but I do not want you teaching my boys anything.

I am sorry as to what happened to Ervin Johnson. He must have known the risk that he was taking when he chose to engage in immorality with others. God warned us so long ago -- "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). May we all, young and old, not absent ourselves from this one great fact -- intimacy between husband and wife is the one and only way to enjoy that which God calls undefiled.

--Guin Church of Christ, Guin, Alabama.

My Father, Thou Art The Guide Of My Youth

(Editor's note: This article is submitted by Gary Neal Pollard, Jr. He is a twenty-one year old Bible Major at Faulkner University, in Montgomery, Alabama. He will earn his Bachelor of Arts degree on May 14, 1992. He presently is working as a youth minister for the Grandview Pines Church of Christ in Millbrook, Alabama.)

The theme of the book of Jeremiah can well be summed up as "the danger of spiritual adultery." Much of the book exposes Judah's wanton chase after the harlot of the hills found under every green tree. No doubt, Judah's philandering was a lifetime commitment to an empty dictator who demanded everything -- their health, their wealth, their

valuable time, yea, their very souls -- in exchange for hopelessness. As idolatry was the hearty pursuit of Judah's mature population, surely there was no other influence for the youth to follow than the frivolous works of gathering the wood that kindled the wrath of Jehovah (Jeremiah 7:18). Unlike God's faithful children, Judah's young had no divine example, strictures therein to govern them, or the proper mindset to grow in nurturing or proper admonition. Jeremiah chapter three, verse four reveals three vital principles needful for our young people today.

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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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Twenty-Two Ways To Spoil Your Child



W. A. Holley

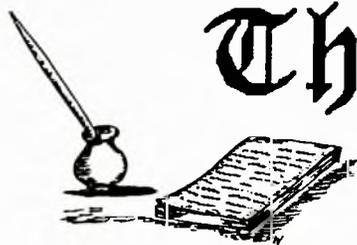
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but

bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Concerning Abraham God said: "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). Here we have God's principle of fathers directing, governing, and instructing their children.

But parents often fall short of what God expects of them. For example, Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phineas. They conducted themselves so outrageously that they excited deep disgust among the people and rendered the services of the temple odious in their eyes. Eli was aware of their misconduct but his mind and ineffectual remonstrances were scorned (I Samuel 2:12-17, 22-26; 3:11-21; 4:11-22).

In contrast to the manner in which the sons of Eli were brought up, Timothy had a godly grandmother and mother, who taught him the Holy Scriptures (II Timothy 1:5; 3:15-17). Verily, to bring up a child in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," involves much more than food, clothing, and shelter (Ephesians 6:4). To "nurture" a child suggests training, discipline, correction that



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Asking And Receiving



David Wade

Death would only come and take me!"

As he spoke, Death appeared to him and said, "What wouldst thou, Mortal? I heard thee call me."

"Please sir," replied the woodcutter, "would you kindly help me to lift this faggot of sticks on to my shoulder?" The moral to the story is, "We would often be sorry if our wishes were gratified."

The Prodigal of Luke 15 learned this lesson the hard way. Apparently, no amount of love his father could show him would keep him from asking for his inheritance to squander in a far country. He had

Aesop tells the story of an old man, bent double with age and toil, gathering wood in the forest. While trudging out of the woods with the load on his back, he grew tired and hopeless. He threw down the bundle of wood and cried out, "I cannot bear this life any longer. Oh, I wish

to experience the pig pen of life before he came to himself. It is regrettable that some lessons are learned in the "school of hard knocks" but for some, that is the only way they learn. Furthermore, James says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:3-4).

It is far better to be in harmony with the will of God. Then, we have the assurance that our prayers shall be answered. "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22). "Now this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (I John 5:14-15).

regulates the development of Christian character.

Jesus Christ must have had wonderful earthly parents. For example, Jesus, at the age of twelve, was found, not on the street, but in the temple, discussing sacred things with the teachers of the law (Luke 2:41-51). Jesus grew in four major areas: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

Verily, the proper rearing of children is no accident; rather, one will need the assistance and guidance, possible. Mother and father, if you want your child to go wrong, follow the rules listed below:

(1) Begin early to give your child everything he wants. Then he will grow up to think that the world owes him a living.

(2) Start early in the child's life to do everything for him. Never permit the child to think he is responsible for anything.

(3) Make him completely dependent upon you by waiting on him until the habit is well established.

(4) Praise your child lavishly and let him think that he is much smarter than other children. Such children always get the message.

(5) Permit the child to do as he pleases. Such a child will think that he should run over those who get in his way.

(6) Tell religious jokes in the presence of your child, at the expense of the elders or preachers; your child will grow up to be dubious of God and his church.

(7) Lose your patience easily. Blow up and bluster and blast the air around your child. He will soon follow in your steps.

(8) Tell your child that he never does any thing wrong. He knows it is not so.

(9) Ride him frequently, reminding him that idiots can't do anything right. Repeat the word "can't" often.

(10) Always find fault with your child and never compliment him on anything he does well. Nag your child constantly.

(11) In his presence find fault with the government. Tell him that all politicians are rotten and corrupt, and that the young people are going to the dogs anyway.

(12) Give the young people the third degree every time they come in. They will soon clam up and refuse to tell you anything.

(13) Avoid the word "wrong." Such a word might lead to a "guilt complex." You don't want your child to think that when he is punished for stealing, he is being persecuted, do you??

(14) Tell everyone, and let him hear you say it, that nothing is too good for your child. Such an approach will enable your child to take by force what belongs to others.

(15) Give your child more spending money than he needs, but never require them to earn their own. Always remember that the word work is an ugly

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My Father, Thou Art The Guide Of My Youth

Continued From Page 1

The Guide

We sing, "How shall the young secure their hearts?"; such is a fair question. This inquiry is made in the congregation and the home, but, perhaps, not often enough. How can we increase the Bible knowledge, the evangelistic fervor, and the feeling of usefulness in the hearts of our young people today? Is it wholly in our youth rallies, our Christian colleges, our programs in the local setting geared toward our youth? These avenues have paid extreme dividends in grounding the faith of our children growing up in the Lord. Our hearts swell with pride as impressionable minds upon profound pondering make wise decisions that will affect their entire lives. Yet countless others are lost in the shuffle of worldliness, temptation, and insecurity. To reach this portion of our youth, a reverence and deep affection directed toward the matchless God must be obtained. They should look to the Holy Scriptures and see those attributes of God that rend the heart permeated by his worthy nature. Personal devotion, because of his unspeakable gift of atonement (Isaiah 6), an understanding of God that lifts him off the pages of the word and into each young mind (Ecclesiastes 12:1), and a knowledge that exhorts our young to work in the vineyard of the Lord (John 15) will prove an unfailing guide. The same word of God that confirmed the diety of Christ, calmed the seas, melted the heart of Nineveh, and convicted the life of Saul of Tarsus, can well speak as a guide of our young people today. Yes, it is the word of God that is viable to pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12). Let the hearts of the young sing loudly and clearly, "Give me the Bible' -- guide of my Youth!

The Guidelines

Paul gave the guidelines to Timothy (I Timothy 4:12). Work and pray that young people will incorporate the proper standard in their lives reflected in speech seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6); that conducting themselves aright they are shown God's salvation (Psalm 50:23); that they love according to the divine handbook (I Corinthians 13:5-8); that they grow in faith,

(Matthew 13:31); and that they pursue purity, so that they will see God (Matthew 5:8). Experience teaches our young people that they find respect, not despite, in ordering themselves as a believer. Much of the persecution they endure in the name of godly living (II Timothy 3:12) is derived from the persecutor's ignorance (John 15:20) or jealousy (I Peter 4:4). The results of such derision and persecution is strength, blessing, and eternal joy (I Peter 4:14; James 1:2; Revelation 6:9; 7:13; Matthew 5:10). The guideline for youth is perseverance in, dedication to, and reverence of Godly living.

The Guided

Happily submitting to God and His direction our young people can be well guided, never misguided. The young mind is an impressionable mind. They should seek role models for right living. Let them shut off their minds to the guile of the adversary propogated in flashing indulgences

and transient pleasures. Let them have minds of clay, that they will be vessels of honor to the potter in the shapeless void of this world's vanity. Parents, you can guide them with proper home training (Proverbs 22:6). Bible teachers, you can guide them through sober preparation and delivery of the whole counsel of God (James 3:1). Preachers, you can guide them through sound exposition of scripture (II Timothy 4:2). Mature Christians, you can guide them by thoughtfully and prayerfully lending the proper example (Matthew 18:6).

Conclusion

The present and future of the church depends upon our youth seeking the proper guidelines wherein they can store their faith, and will be guided. As we will lead them in some direction, let them, upon viewing our driving influence, ring out, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth!"

Twenty-Two Ways To Spoil Your Child

Continued From Page 2

word. Provide your child with an expensive car and allow him to come and go without any restrictions at all. Parents, you will pay the price!!

(16) Never set any rules to govern the conduct of your son or daughter. If some rules have been set, never enforce them.

(17) Let the husband and wife quarrel frequently in the presence of their children. Such a situation will surely help your children to be prepared for a broken home later in their lives.

(18) Never make your child go to church. You can make your child go to school, to eat his food, but never make your child go to church.

(19) Always take your child's part against his teachers, the policeman, or neighbors. As you know, he is always right and never wrong. These people are prejudiced against your child and don't want him to do well.

(20) When your child gets into trouble always defend him and refuse to take any responsibility for the way he was brought up, saying: "I never

could do anything with that boy, any way."

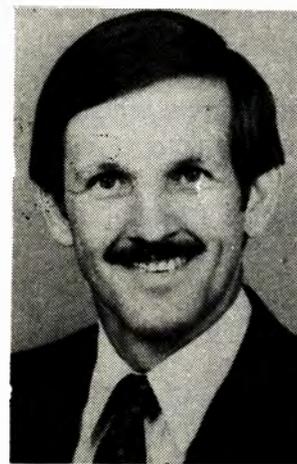
(21) Do not set a good, calm example before your child. He might get the idea that he should act that way, too.

(22) Parents, laugh at your child's idea that it is right to fudge on his grades, to tell "little white lies," and to "sow a few wild oats." Just grin in a kind of "you naughty boy," when he tells you sneaking into functions without paying. Enjoy a hearty laugh with him over those little escapades by which he "out foxed" others with their dishonesty and charming crookedness.

These words are written for those parents who desire to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4).

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

Isn't It Easy To Conform?

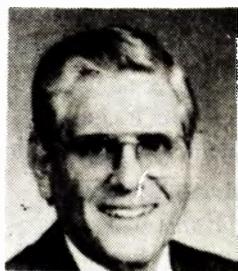


Demar Elam

Conforming to the world is one of the easiest things we do in life. Isn't it easy to conform? However, Paul instructed those at Rome with these words "and be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). Divine inspiration demands non-conformity with the world. So, did Paul mean that we

aren't to do anything that people in this world are doing? Certainly not! There are many acts of acceptable conduct that people in the world engage in. But, Paul has in mind our being conformed to

What Would Jesus Have Me Do?



John Gipson

If one is willing to listen to the voice of God, he will hear the words of Jesus. Peter, James and John learned this firsthand. On a high mountain they watched Jesus as his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. What an occasion! But there was more to come. A bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased: listen to him" (Matthew 17:5). If you respect the voice of God you will listen to his Son.

The Hebrew writer confirms all of this by pointing out that in the past God spoke in many and various ways, "but in these last days he has

spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (Hebrews 1:2).

There are many voices crying out in the world today, but the one I need to hear above all others is the voice of God's Son. And that is because God has expressly told us to hear him.

Jesus calls us into his fellowship in words that are clear and unmistakable. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden . . . Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me" (Matthew 11:28, 29). That's what Jesus wants you to do! Have you done it? Believers in the city of Corinth did, and the apostle Paul speaks of how they were called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord

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Isn't It Easy To Conform?

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those acts of conduct that are evil and wrong.

The great apostle of love wrote, "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Our world is surrounded and permeated with wickedness. Being conformed to the world carries the idea of going along with its wickedness.

Webster defines the word conform thusly: 1) to be similar or identical 2) to be obedient or compliant; especially to adapt oneself to prevailing standards or customs.

A synonym of conform is agree. Conformity is the order of the day but isn't that because conforming to the standards and customs around us is the easiest thing for all of us to do?

Satan is the prince of this world (John 14:30; 16:11) and we read in Galatians 1:4 that Christ died to deliver us from this present evil world. If we drift with the tide of today's world, we'll find ourselves conforming to such sins as immoral

sexual acts, filthy language, lying, stealing, murder, greed, hatred, idolatry, drunkenness, and pride.

We are living in perilous times! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty" (II Corinthians 6:17, 18). We must not form the pattern or mold of today's society. Though there are many good and wonderful things happening in our times we are forced to admit that sin is rampant in our present world.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1). Let us break away from conformity with the world. Faith. Courage. Conviction and Holiness should be

very much a part of our lives today.

If you live righteously, you will definitely be considered a non-conformist and will attract, like a lightning rod, the scorn of a world that demands conformity. But just as the lightning rod protects those around it, so you will guard fellow Christians by your example of receiving the fiery darts of the wicked without submitting to them.

If you live righteously, you will definitely be considered a non-conformist and will attract, like a lightning rod, the scorn of a world that demands conformity.

--Southern Christian University, P.O. Box 240240, Montgomery, AL 36124.

This Is Not A Hamburger Stand

Bob Plunkett

I had a call early one Sunday morning and the person asked, "How long will your services last and do you serve the Lord's Supper first or last?" They were probably traveling and wanted their crackers and grape juice to go. Many are demanding today that we be quick and convenient. It seems that many religious leaders are taking the Burger King approach "Have it your way," but we're not a hamburger stand. We're the body of Christ. It is tempting today to apply the fast food approach but it will be deadly to the church. One church in California already has drive-in services. You simply put the speaker in your car, listen to a brief message, hang it up and get on your way. Will some offer a drive-in window where one can get the Lord's Supper and go fishing or hunting? Will we eventually have home delivery? Yes, the hamburger people say, "We can hold the lettuce. We can hold the pickle. We can hold the onion." It seems that some even hold the patty. The same cry has come to church: "Hold the water. Hold the works. We want a grace only salvation. Hold the preaching. Hold the doctrine. Hold the singing." We are not at liberty to hold anything that God's word specifies. Many in our great brotherhood today cry change, adapt, and conform or die. We must not panic because we're not growing like the hamburger stands. We must not let the liberals exploit our frustration by saying, "You would grow if you were more liberal." The Catholic church has tried to accommodate their people for years and every year their numbers shrink.

We're not in the growth business. At least this is not our priority. We are to sow, plant and water. God will give the increase. Paul saw this day and said, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Another version says, "When people won't tolerate sound doctrine but after their own lusts, appetites and fancies they will have it their own way" (II Timothy 4:2-3).

And what was Paul's recommendation? Preach the word not relevance, not mere peace and harmony, not the end justifies the means. Nor are we in the people pleasing business. Paul said, "If I were still pleasing men I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). His business and ours is to please Christ.

Maybe the church is like a hospital emergency room where men and women from all walks of life come in sick, hurt, bleeding, and dying. Yet they all ask for the same thing -- please help me. They don't ask to have it their way. They are not concerned about how long it will take. They don't ask how soft are the mattresses? They don't ask the temperature of the room. They don't notice

whether the carpet and curtains match. They don't walk out because there is someone in the next bed they don't like. They don't go back home because no one spoke to them. They do not leave because the doctor has on a green jacket instead of a white one.

Until we can convince the world of its sick, lost and dying condition and lift Jesus up as the great physician and the only hope in this world, men will continue to be picky. The prodigal was picky until he was destitute. Then he said, "Make me a servant." The church is facing a spoiled, pampered, indulged generation and we must not give in.

--Tuscumbia, AL.

What Would Jesus Have Me Do?

Continued from page 3

(I Corinthians 1:9). Won't you hear the voice of Jesus as did the Corinthians?

Jesus calls upon us to believe in him. According to Jesus this is eternal life. "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life" (John 3:36). Peter tells us that "every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43). If you do what Jesus wants you to do, you will believe in him!

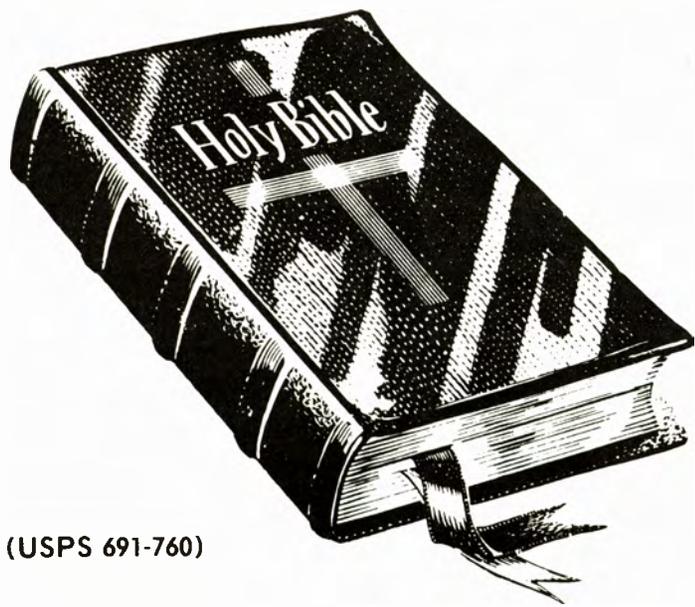
Jesus wants me to repent of my sins. He preached, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Those who refused to repent he upbraided, and warned what would happen to them on the day of judgment (Matthew 11:20-24). If I do what Jesus wants me to do, I will repent.

Jesus wants me to confess and acknowledge him before men. He says, "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32, 33). That's plain, isn't it!

Jesus wants me to be baptized. He said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Jesus was baptized, and he wants me to be. He says I must be born of the water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:1-5).

I want to do what Jesus wants me to do because life is at stake. "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life" (John 3:36).

--Little Rock, Arkansas.



(USPS 691-760)

Word - Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble F
Words of Truth and soberness

ak forth the

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 28

JANUARY 31, 1992

NUMBER 5

Their Bondage is Over!



Don Williams

been preceded by the release of two other American hostages Alann Steen and Joseph Cicippio.

One cannot imagine the strain and stress these men have had to endure. Anderson was held hostage for seven years, with the other two men being held for five years. Steen and Cicippio bear the marks of punishment and torture tactics upon their bodies, but at least they are alive. Now the men can enjoy being with some family members that heretofore they had never seen. Terry Anderson was asked if he had any words to send along to his Shiite kidnappers. His response was short and direct: "Goodbye!"

While Anderson, Steen, Cicippio, Sutherland and the others are free from their enslaved conditions, we as Christians must daily continue our onslaught against that which would seek to enslave us: SIN! Satan, the personification of sin, regularly tries to engulf us into a lifestyle that would meet with his approval. He has various means to entrap us, and we must "not be ignorant of his devices" (II Corinthians 2:11). He will seek to make sin appear beautiful (Genesis 3:6), pleasurable (Hebrews 11:25), and even disguise sin so that you think it the right choice to select (II Corinthians 11:14, Hebrews 3:13). Satan knows that if he can get us to bite, (James 1:14), then we can become enslaved, thus becoming a puppet and sin our cruel master. Sin's final result will be spiritual death (Romans 6:16). This is a battle we must fight everyday.

That which had been long hoped for, but was somewhat unexpected, has happened -- the last of our American hostages have been released from Lebanon. Terry Anderson, a forty-four year old Associated Press correspondent, was released by his Shiite Muslim captors. His release had

We must always remember that sin "lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7), ever ready to gain access into our lives if we allow it to.

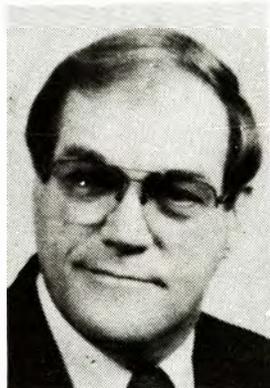
Terry Anderson was asked how he could endure almost seven years of loneliness, despair and separation from his homeland and his family. His answer was that each day he got up with the attitude that he had to make it through the day and do whatever he had to to endure it. So also, the Christian life must involve a great deal of discipline. Paul put it this way when he wrote, "I keep under (buffet or discipline) 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). Our heavenly Father is willing and able to aid us as we daily fight with the temptations of this life. He has promised us that he will "provide a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

Anderson and the other hostages do not have to worry about their former hostages anymore. We must always remember that sin "lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7), ever ready to gain access into our lives if we allow it to. We must continue the battle against sin until death comes, or Jesus comes in judgment. May we never become slaves to sin, and may we ever remember the promise of our Savior: "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

--Guin Church of Christ, Guin, Alabama.

"We Ourselves Will Build"



Bobby Duncan

this: "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel . . ." (Ezra 4:3).

Commenting on this passage in the 1948 Annual Lesson Commentary, Roy H. Lanier, Sr., said:

"This exclusiveness is a Christian people -- not that one Christian is to exclude another, or that one church of the Lord is to exclude another, but Christians are not to mix with the world in the work of the church; they are not to cooperate in

When the Jews who had come out of Babylonian captivity began to build the temple of the Lord, some of the Samaritans came to them and said: "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him . . ." (Ezra 4:2). But the reply given by Zerubbabel and the other leaders of the Jews was

spiritual activities with those who are not Christians . . . Gospel work is the work of Christians, the servants of Christ; the servants of the devil, people who have never obeyed the gospel, have no more right to have a part in gospel work than these Samaritans had a right to engage in the rebuilding of the temple."

Though these Samaritans claimed to worship God, their worship was corrupted, and faithful leaders of God's people correctly excluded them from fellowship in doing the work of the Lord. I wonder how some in the church today would have handled this situation?

But notice also the word together -- "We ourselves together will build . . ." The building of this house was a monumental task for those few Jews who had recently been captives in Babylon. But they knew they could get the job done if they cooperated. Any one of them who did not cooperate would be lending aid and encouragement to their enemies, who actually did

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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The Church Is Full Of Imperfections



W. T. Allison

The church of Christ is composed of imperfect members, including preachers, teachers, deacons and elders.

Not a member of the organization is without faults, but the amazing thing about the Lord's Cause is that God has

been able to work wonders through the agency of the imperfect. In fact, He has never had a chance to work with any other kind.

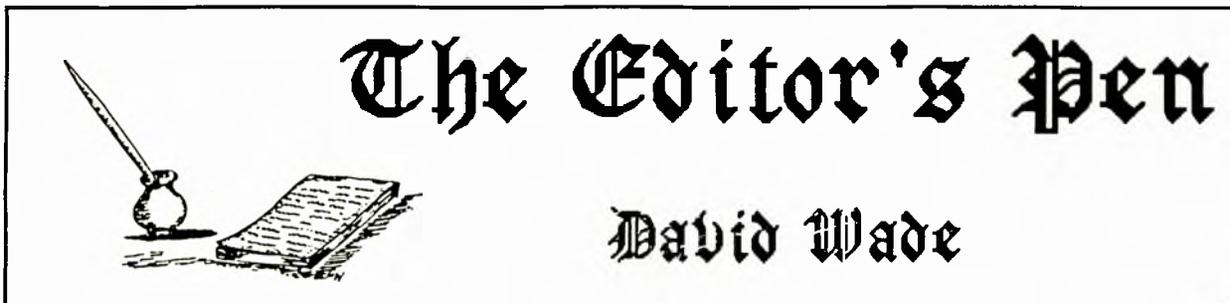
If a preacher ever finds a congregation which has no faults, he will have found a place where no teaching, preaching or training is needed. Yet the Scriptures tell us that teaching is to be done continually as long as time shall last.

If any congregation finds a preacher who is perfect, he will seem unreal, completely without understanding of the difficulties under which imperfect people struggle.

It is the imperfect Christians, working together, wrestling against their tendencies to be carnally-minded, forgiving one another's faults, who come the nearest to presenting to Christ the "perfect" church.

If you know of anyone who stays away from worship services because of the imperfect people there -- invite him back! Why? Well, because there's always room for one more.

--1901 Schillinger Rd., Mobile, Alabama.



"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 fades from the scene, the evil work of Hymenaeus continues. 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

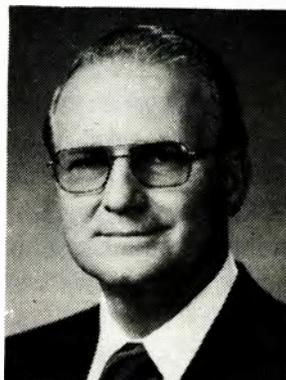
vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the solid foundation 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 taken 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 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).

"The truth shall make you free."

Forgiveness



Bobby Key

Christ.

Among the last words spoken by our Lord is the statement, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). The Greek verb here is the imperfect tense, which implies continuance

of action. That is, the words were repeated over and over. These words have become the standard of Christian forgiveness. Three thousand were forgiven on the Day of Pentecost after having heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel preached by the apostle Peter.

We each have a conscience, or inner sense of right and wrong. We have been endowed with the capacity for feeling guilt. Forgiveness is man's deepest need and highest achievement. Forgiveness is necessary for a right relationship with God, with others, and even with ourselves (Matthew 6:9-12; Philippians 3:13). Forgiveness helps restore both physical and mental health.

To forgive another person is not primarily a favor to the individual you forgive as much as it is to

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"We Ourselves Will Build"

Continued From Page 1

not want them to succeed in building the temple. There was no neutral ground; one either cooperated in the work, or else he was helping the enemy. Isn't this the very principle Jesus had in mind when he said: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30)? When one member of the church fails to cooperate with the leaders of the congregation, that member is actually aiding and abetting the devil in his efforts to overthrow the Lord's work. And one member of the church criticizing, complaining, and refusing to cooperate can do more harm to the church than a hundred outsiders could ever do by their evil efforts. What marvelous things can be accomplished when we all work together!

One other thing which guaranteed the success of

their efforts was their motive: "We . . . build unto the Lord God of Israel . . ." It was not now a matter of their building dwellings for themselves, nor of their building a wall for their own protection and safety. Rather they were building a house for the Lord. That which gave them strength to accomplish this tremendous undertaking was their desire to honor and glorify God. Here is a matter closer to the hearts of these Jews than the preservation of their own lives -- building the house of the Lord! They were like Paul who, knowing bonds and afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem, said: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course . . ." (Acts 20:24). When the work of the Lord becomes the driving force in our lives, when it becomes more precious

to us than life itself, then we will be able to accomplish great things in his service.

When the work of the Lord becomes the driving force in our lives, when it becomes more precious to us than life itself, then we will be able to accomplish great things in his service.

So let us ourselves together build to the honor and glory of our God.

--2805 Madison Street, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Comprehensive Preaching



Cecil May, Jr.

Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that his preaching at Ephesus had been comprehensive (Acts 20:18-35).

Comprehensive in time. Paul preached at all seasons, from the first day he set foot in Asia for the whole three years he was among them (vv. 18,

31). He "did not cease night or day to warn every one with tears" (v. 31), even while supporting himself with his own hands (v. 34).

Preachers expect members who work 40 hours a week to also attend services, participate in meetings and group activities, and visit and teach others. It ill behooves preachers to complain if we do not get two days off a week, or if our work-day is longer than 9:00 to 5:00. We must "be urgent, in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2).

Comprehensive in method. Paul taught "in public and from house to house" (v. 20).

Some preachers became glad handing social worker-psychologist-administrators, and a needed call rang out to preachers, "Study and preach the word." Some mistook this, unfortunately, as a call to shut themselves up in their study and not to visit, as "pastoral work" interferes with preaching. Many need the gospel who will not attend services: erring or troubled members, "publicans and sinners," "every creature," "all nations." Those who will not hear publicly should be sought "from house to house."

Comprehensive in message. Paul "did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God" (v. 27). He preached the word of God's grace and built them up, assuring them of an inheritance among the sanctified (v. 35). He also preached negative

things, "warning" that fierce wolves would come, not sparing the flock, and that some among them would speak "perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (vv. 29-30).

Touching every member's felt need and pushing the baby boomers' every "hot button" is still not preaching the whole counsel of God. Teaching the truth on every "issue," and exposing every known false brother is still not preaching the whole counsel of God.

Touching every member's felt need and pushing the baby boomers' every "hot button" is still not preaching the whole counsel of God. Teaching the truth on every "issue," and exposing every known false brother is still not preaching the whole counsel of God. The "whole counsel" begins with God, proclaims His gift in Christ, shows how to

obey the gospel, and points the way to life in Him, showing both the way to go and the ways not to go.

Another word for *comprehensive* is *balanced*.

--P.O. Box 1101, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Forgiveness

Continued From Page 2

yourself. Forgiveness is the greatest act of self interest in which you can engage. A burden is lifted. No person is up to par, with full energy, until he can forgive. Forgiveness means all emotional impact has been removed from the thing that happened. You can think and talk about the incident with no bitterness, resentment, or ill feeling. A number of otherwise good people have carried a burden of resentment to their own hurt.

To forgive another person is not primarily a favor to the individual you forgive as much as it is to yourself. Forgiveness is the greatest act of self interest in which you can engage.

Have you been forgiven? Do you practice forgiveness?

"If I have wounded any soul today, If I have caused one foot to go astray,

If I have walked in my own willful way, Dear Lord forgive."

"Let justice rule in all the earth, and mercy while we live,

Lest we forgiven much, forget our brother to forgive."

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How Old Was The Blind Man?



W. A. Holley

We suggest that the entire 9th chapter of John be carefully read. Obviously, we do not know the age of the Blind Man at the time Jesus gave him sight, but the context shows he was of sufficient age to speak for himself (John 9:21). All children, if they are normal, reach the age of accountability. No child has ever been born a sinner (Ezekiel 18:19-20). The theologians talk of "original sin," but the Bible knows nothing about such a ridiculous idea. A child becomes a sinner when he is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. The apostle John tells us that "sin is the transgression of the law," but no baby can transgress the law (I John 3:4).

How Old Was The Blind Man? We shall see--

(1) He was old enough to know who he was. Many have been stoned on drugs and alcohol till they do not know who they are. Millions do not know they are sinners before God. These refuse to believe and obey the truth of God (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38). Millions of sinners refuse to admit that they must stand before God in judgment and give an account to Him for their rebellion and recklessness against His will (Matthew 7:21-23; II Corinthians 5:10-11; See John 9:8-9).

(2) He was old enough to know he was blind (John 9:1-3). This man had been blind from birth, and his blindness was a great handicap indeed, but there is another kind of blindness which is far more dreadful. What is that? Well, it is spiritual blindness. Jesus teaches that some stop their ears and close their eyes that they not hear and see the truth of God (Matthew 13:15). Peter teaches that some are "blind, and cannot see afar off" (II Peter 1:9). Paul puts it very succinctly when he says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:3-4). Thus, Satan has blinded the minds of countless millions.

Verily, Satan has his own ministers (II Corinthians 11:13-15), his own doctrines (I Timothy 4:1-3), and his own churches (Revelation 2:9; 3:9). One who does not understand the power and influence of Satan can never understand the world in which we live.

(3) He was old enough to understand that Jesus was not a sinner (See verses 30-32). Many of the leading Jews of Jesus' day argued that Jesus was a sinner. The blind man had sense enough to know that if Jesus had been a sinner, he would not have healed him (John 9:31). Prayer is a privilege which belongs to the children of God. Satan is the father of his children (John 8:44). God is the Father of his children (I John 3:10).

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized

shall be saved." He did not say, "He that believeth and prayeth shall be saved." Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." But Peter did not say, "Repent and pray in the name of Christ for the remission of sins." We suggest that Mark 16:15-16 and Acts 2:36-38 be read. It is a sin pervert the truth of God (Galatians 1:6-10).

(4) He was old enough to believe (John 9:35-38). But faith alone is not enough (James 2:14-26). Faith must express itself in overt acts of obedience (Acts 6:7; John 12:41-42). When the blind man was told to go wash, he went and washed. Do you believe enough to obey the command of Jesus? Did not Jesus say: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). To be saved one must do more than say, "Lord, Lord" (Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:8-9).

(5) He was old enough to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. When he was told to go to the pool of Siloam, he went there. He did not try to find a pool nearer or one he liked better. He simply followed Jesus' directions. Today, many are more concerned about convenience than they are about obedience (Revelation 22:14). "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not

grievous" (I John 5:3). That person who truly loves God will not stumble at what God commands (I Peter 2:8). Roman Catholicism and other forms of denominationalism have caused millions to stumble at the Lord's plain and simple truth (cf. Malachi 2:8).

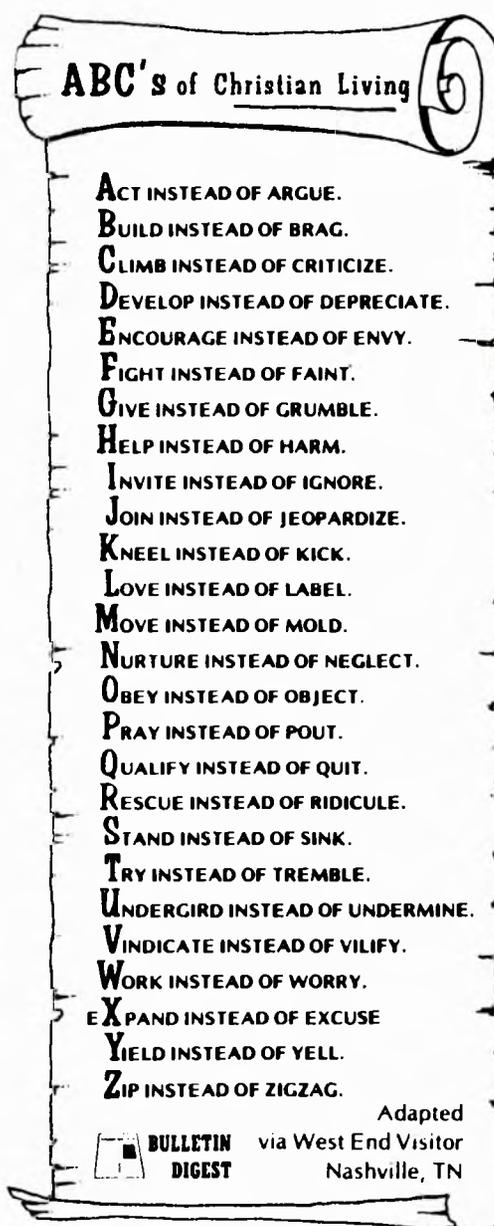
(6) He was old enough to trust the promises of God. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts" (II Peter 1:3-4).

Jesus promised the blind man that if he went to the pool of Siloam and washed he would have his sight. The blind man trusted the promise of Jesus and did accordingly. He received the gift of sight.

The Lord has promised us that if we hear, believe, repent, confess Jesus' name, be baptized in water for the remission of sins, our souls shall be saved from sin. He further promised us an eternal home in heaven if we will but remain faithful unto death (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; I Peter 3:20-21; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; Revelation 2:10).

Dear Reader, have you learned as much as the blind man learned? We hope so.

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



Love

Though I am a Sunday School teacher of many years experience, but have not love, I am teaching in the energy of the flesh and not by the power of God's Spirit.

And though I have great wisdom, and understand all doctrine, and most difficult verses in the Bible:

And though I have graduated from a college, and studied the Bible for many years, and have not love, I am nothing,

And though I spend much time preparing each lesson, finding illustrations, making life-related application, And though I visit my students regularly, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

For now we see and understand only a little about God and what He wants us to do; But someday we will see him face to face and will clearly know the truth as fully as God now knows each one of us!

And now abideth organization, teacher training, various methods, excellent curriculum, lesson preparation, weekly visitation, unique programs, enthusiastic promotion, special publicity and love.

These many things are sometimes present in the Sunday school, but the greatest of these is LOVE!

(Via The Getwell Church Bulletin)



(USPS 691-760)

Word: Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Fes
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the
-Acts 26:25

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Saving Faith Is Like The Nightingale, A Song Bird At Night



Cecil Corkren

The European nightingale is characterized by its melodious singing and by the singing of its sweetest songs especially at night. An Indian from Calcutta, India, Rabindranath Tagore, said, "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark." This philosophy is comparable to Abraham's faith for that which was promised him was to excite his hope. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations" (Romans 4:18). Tagore, though he was born in Calcutta, India, amidst poverty and despair, could still have faith like the song bird at night, and rise above his surroundings and become a great poet, philosopher and supporter of freedom for India. This in of itself was an achievement of great faith. Jesus saw this kind of faith in praising the Centurion for his great faith when he said to Jesus, "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). Jesus, "said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:10).

Christians with faith in God's care and protection can face any problem by "Casting all your cares (anxiety) upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). Knowing this should stir in our hearts the greatest of faith, and cause us to sing the song of faith by night. Abraham did not procrastinate when he was told by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac. He truly demonstrated his faith by rising up early in the morning (Genesis 22:3). He was like the "bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."

Tagore dreamed: "I slept and dreamt/ that life

was joy/ I woke and saw/ that life was duty/ I acted, and behold! Duty was joy!" When the Christian moves, with faith by night, toward God he or she will find the greatest joy through duty and gratitude in serving others. When we serve others we are through faith serving our Lord. Brothers and sisters we all should find reasons to sing in the darkness during troubled times. The church is going through some difficult times, and the prospects for numerical growth as well as spiritual growth seems at a stand still; therefore, we should sing our best songs like the nightingale. When things look the darkest could be just before the dawn.

"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."

Paul and Silas sang and prayed in the Philippian jail at the hour of midnight, when things looked the darkest for these two preachers. They perhaps prayed the most beautiful prayers and sang like the nightingale the most melodious, because their audience was their fellowprisoners. When our way seems the darkest we should like Abraham trust God by faith, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, and giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20). Saving faith is when we can sing at the hour of midnight, when there seems to be little hope for the future.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

I Am Pro Choice!

John W. Hall

Our nation has been debating the abortion question for some time now. Recently the State of Utah passed a bill that experts say will probably wind up in the Supreme Court, which could have some effects on previous rulings. When we look at those who debate the question, they are usually divided into two groups: Pro-Choice and Pro-Life. In this matter I am Pro-Life.

Pro choice means that the mother has the right to decide about the matter and no one else. In the matter of abortion, these people forget about the rights of the unborn. While they claim to be Pro choice, they are not . . . for they do exactly the opposite of what they claim . . . in that they decide

for the infant. They forget that they are here because no one decided against their future. They are here because their parents believed in the sanctity of life, their life even before they were born.

However, being pro choice does not have to be a bad thing. I would like to think I am pro choice in a number of things. Every legitimate child of God is one because he freely chose to become one. No one forced it on him. Here are some areas in which I am pro choice. What about you?

I am pro choice about the Bible. I choose to

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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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Mixed Messages #1



David Wade

The February-March 1992 edition of *Modern Maturity* (a publication of the American Association of Retired Persons) contains an interesting article under the above title by Michael Massing.

He is a journalist and a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities at New York

University, and is writing a book about the war on drugs. The article cites many inconsistencies of government efforts in the war on drugs. We shall note a few of the examples and statistics he offers.

Perhaps you have noticed the new wave of anti-drug ads featuring a man diving into an empty pool, a mother mourning her dead son, or an egg frying in the skillet. These vividly portray what heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and other drugs of abuse do to people. These commercials fade only to be replaced by some sporting event sponsored by beer, or other alcoholic products. Many such double standards regarding licit and illicit drugs pervade American Society.

When Atlanta Braves outfielder Otis Nixon failed his drug test he was immediately suspended for 60 days. When Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Len Dykstra totaled his car after a night of drinking, he was not even fined.

Cocaine, crack, and heroin claim about 7,000 American lives annually; and by contrast alcohol claims 100,000. Someone is killed by a drunk driver every 24 minutes and more than 540,000 people are injured by alcohol related accidents every year. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates that alcohol-related problems cost our nation \$86 billion annually.

The alcohol industry spends almost \$2 billion annually on advertising with beer companies spending \$675 million, most of it on TV ads that appear during sporting events. These ads are aimed primarily at young people who constitute a large segment of the viewing audience. It should come as no surprise that Spuds McKenzie -- Anheuser-Busch's "party animal" became a cult figure on college campuses. The company is now promoting "Bud Man," a cuddly caped character that seems right out of the comic book.

The legal minimum drinking age is now 21 in all 50 states. According to a recent HHS report about 8 million American junior and senior high students use alcohol weekly, with more than 450,000

"binge" drinkers consuming an average of 15 alcoholic drinks every week.

Needless to say, we are facing enormous problems with alcohol abuse. While our efforts in eradicating the illicit drugs must be increased, we must not overlook the larger problem that goes largely unnoticed.

In view of these statistics, the Christian who argues that social drinking is "OK" ought to hang his head in shame. Lest we forget, let's be reminded of God's warnings recorded in his inspired Holy Writ. "Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

"Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine.
Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly;
At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper.
Your eyes will see strange things,
And your heart will utter perverse things.

Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,

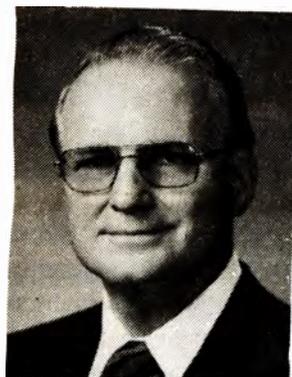
Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying:

"They have struck me,
but I was not hurt;
They have beaten me,
but I did not feel it.
When shall I awake,
that I may seek another drink?" (Proverbs 23:29-35).

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, or adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor DRUNKARDS, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Think For Yourself



Bobby Key

Most of us are content to let others do our thinking. Often a very few individuals do the thinking for the majority. Many are blind followers of the blind, going along with little thought as to where they are being led. Cattle are easily stampeded; people who do not think are easily carried away on waves of

passion or excitement. In an emergency, one level-headed person, who is able to think, may save a number of lives.

Mental interia is the curse of our time. Thought is the only process of finding ways and means of improvement, and yet the lazy mind is content to let things ride.

Mental interia is the curse of our time. Thought is the only process of finding ways and means of improvement, and yet the lazy mind is content to let things ride.

A small group controls everything you see on television and read in the newspapers. This trend is also true in the political, educational, and social environment. Unfortunately, this is also true in the church. Generally our great brotherhood is influenced by a few. We come to see things through the eyes of some intelligent person who can think for himself and express himself fluently.

We encourage our readers to be individuals -- to

What If Jesus Were To Be On Trial Today?



Don Williams

If Jesus Christ were to appear in court and be tried today, what would the outcome be?

In our present court system, jurors are summoned to sit on a panel. They are all asked to affirm that they will answer all questions from the judge and the attorneys truthfully and to the best of their ability. Jurors are then asked to affirm that, if they are selected for a jury, they will listen to the evidence given and they will render an impartial and unbiased verdict. Various questions are asked by the state prosecuting attorney, as well as the attorney for the defense. If Jesus were on trial, and the question was asked, what is your relationship to the one on trial, how could you truthfully respond? There would be many who might think themselves to be in close association with our Lord, when in fact they are not. Jesus talked of friendship when he said, "ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). Although many would claim allegiance and friendship with our Lord, if the truth were known,

For the second time in two years, I have been summoned to be on jury duty. Not having been in court before these summons, it has been interesting to me to see how our judicial system works. As I was driving back home from court, I thought of this question --

If Jesus Christ were to

they would actually be his enemy, because of their attractions to and friendships with the world (James 4:4).

Another question that is often asked by lawyers is, what knowledge do you have of this man who is on trial before you? Again, there would be many who would claim intimate, first-hand, "perfect knowledge of that Way" (Acts 24:22), when in fact that would not be the case. Jesus talked of some in his day who thought they followed him in this way -- "this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). He spoke of other supposed followers when he exclaimed, "and why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Could we give enough evidence in our life to prove that we were a follower of his, well acquainted with his beliefs and his way of life?

Several questions are usually asked by the attorneys to see if there is any bias or prejudice concerning the person being tried, or the crime that he has allegedly committed. Would we be struck from the jury panel because we were found to be prejudiced in favor of Jesus Christ? Someone might easily respond in the affirmative, but we must remember that two of his twelve disciples rejected him, one denying him, the other betraying him. We can sing "All to Jesus I surrender" all we want to but if we do not live out our love for him daily, then in essence we deny and betray Jesus by not living as we say we live.

If Jesus were on trial today, would he be found

innocent of any sinful charges brought forth against him? I believe so. But perhaps, the more relevant question is this, if charges of being a "faithful child of God" were brought forth against us, would there be enough evidence gathered against us to convict us?

If charges of being a "faithful child of God" were brought forth against us, would there be enough evidence gathered against us to convict us?

--Guin Church of Christ, Guin, Alabama.

Think For Yourself

Continued From Page 2

think for themselves, to not be carried away by every wind of doctrine, to stand for their convictions at all times regardless of the opposition. Take your Bible and read and study it for yourself. We are persuaded that all are able to understand what God's will is. Things that have the most to do with salvation are easily understood by the individual who honestly opens his Bible and studies for himself.

The mind is an awful thing to waste. When one fails to think for himself he is gullible to any false teacher. This is the reason television evangelists have such followings. Most who listen week after week and send their money have never learned how to think for themselves. The more eager a soul is for salvation, the more gullible he often will be. He hungrily and humbly reaches out to any teacher, any teaching, any institution that seems able to point him in the direction of heaven. The Holy Spirit warns us: "Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1.) The thinking person will not decide on an issue too rapidly. He will not be too easily satisfied. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," is good advice.

It is amazing how gullible one becomes when he wants something badly. A young person buying his first used car, wants a car so much that he easily becomes a sucker, a victim of anyone who would impose on his gullibility.

The poor thinker, the wrong-headed thinker, the non-thinker is always annoyed or irritated at any one who brings proof that he is wrong. His egoism or opinion often kills his ability to think. There is neither glory or wisdom in traveling the wrong direction.

In every generation men have attempted to substitute human reason for Divine Revelation. The truth does not need to be sifted through me to be truth. I am not infallible but the Bible is infallible. We must be governed by the Word of God in matters of faith. In matters of opinion we leave men free to exercise their liberty of choice. We dare not bind what God has loosed. We refuse to be governed by human laws. Neither will we loose what God has bound (Matthew 16:19).

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Adam, A Type Of Christ

Continued From Page 1

while he slept, God took a rib from his side with which He made woman that Adam might have a bride (Genesis 2:21, 22). The church was established after Jesus died on the cross (Ephesians 2:15). After Jesus was dead, while still on the cross, His side was pierced, and His blood with which He purchased the church was poured out (John 19:33, 34; Acts 20:28). Therefore, as Adam suffered his side to be opened that he might have a wife, Christ suffered his side to be opened, and gave Himself for the church (John 19:33; Ephesians 5:25).

Adam awoke and was revived after the rib was taken from his side (Genesis 2:21-24). Christ arose from the dead after His blood had been poured out (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:4).

The creation of Eve was a biological miracle, but all since have been from corruptible seed by the law of propagation (Genesis 1:27; 2:21-24; I Peter 1:21). The church was established by miraculous power (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15). All now must enter the church or kingdom by the law of conversion (Romans 1:16; Acts 3:19). All must be born again by incorruptible seed, which is the Word of God (I Peter 1:23; John 3:5; Romans 8:14).

God blessed Adam and Eve and commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:27). Likewise, the church is to bear fruit, that is, to make converts (John 15:1-6, Romans 7:4).

Children who were born into Adam's family were

not born full-grown. Likewise, we enter into God's spiritual family by a new birth which is a spiritual birth (John 3:5). We begin as babes at the new birth, and we must grow. Proper food must be provided for physical growth. Even so, proper food must be provided for growth in the church (I Peter 2:2, II Peter 3:18).

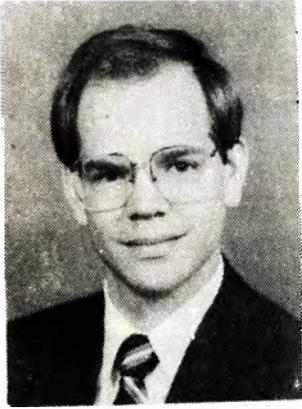
Adam had but one wife, and he was the head of his wife who was called by his name (Genesis 5:1, 2; Matthew 19:4-6). Jesus built but one church, and of course, He is the head of His church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23). His disciples are called Christians (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). This is the new name that Isaiah said God's people would be called (Isaiah 62:2). This is the only new name in the New Testament by which God's people are called.

Adam brought physical death upon all, and all will be raised by Christ -- the second Adam (I Corinthians 15:20-23). We are all now in the image of Adam (I Corinthians 15:49). We will be in the image of Christ after the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:46-49).

Such, then are some of the more striking points of resemblance between Adam and Christ and should increase our faith in Christ and the Bible.

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36022 Phone (205) 361-0468.

God Has Done His Part -- Have You Done Yours?



Brad T. Bromling

Surely no one would contend that the world's current state of affairs is ideal. Examples of man's inhumanity to man are on every hand. War is an ever-present reality; somewhere, at every moment of the day, someone is fighting with someone else. Shameful sexual perversions are rampant; innocent men, women, and children are victimized by such deviant behavior. Millions of people continue to serve slavishly the personally elected tyrants called alcohol, opium, and cocaine. Materialism has so warped the thinking of whole nations that the poor are often treated as though they are simply getting what they deserve. Murder, theft, rape -- virtually everything short of absolute anarchy plagues planet Earth. Why? Man has left God out of his life (Romans 1:21).

Admitting that man's situation is grim, and that he is responsible for it, the question naturally arises: "What is to become of men who spurn God?" The terrifying answer is that the wrath of God is held in store for them (Romans 1:18, 32). Although few details are given, the reality of a coming judgment is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Every person who has ever lived will give an accounting to the Creator for the deeds committed while living upon the Earth (Acts 17:31; II Corinthians 5:10). Jesus Christ will some day descend to the clouds and call everyone from the tombs. Those who have lived in harmony with God's Word will be raised to enjoy eternal delight in heaven, and those who have lived in rebellion will be raised to suffer eternal punishment (John 5:28, 29). Is this fair? Abraham asked another question which shares the same answer: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). The obvious answer is, "Yes!" Hence, God's judgment is "righteous" (Romans 1:32). While man may struggle to understand the details of eternal judgment, he may be confident that God will do only that which is right. Actually, God has done His part; man must do his.

Mankind does not have to flounder in the mire of wickedness. He has within his grasp all the data he needs to enter a harmonious relationship with his Maker. God has revealed this important information in two ways. The primary revelation (i.e., divine disclosure to man) comes to man from the natural world that surrounds him. Paul wrote: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead . . ." (Romans 1:20). A cursory examination of stars in the night sky reveals God's majestic power and orderliness. David once wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Contemplation of the human ability to reason should drive one to conclude that there is a

Creator who is rational and intelligent. The intricate design of the human body should cause man to admit: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Even the weather serves as proof that God is. This point was made by Paul before a heathen audience in the city of Lystra: "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). In nearly every direction man turns, he finds evidence of God's revelation. Rebellious effort is required for him to overlook it. The evidence is so overwhelming that it is inexcusable for a man to claim he is ignorant of God's existence (Romans 1:20).

The information provided by nature should lead each man to the second source of revelation -- the Bible. In that Book one learns what the Almighty requires of His creatures; he learns how the Universe was brought into being, and of the proper place man has in his world. He also learns of God's efforts to provide him with freedom from the slavery of wickedness, and how this was ultimately accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-3). In fact, the Bible reveals **everything** that God requires in order for man to live in hope of eternal life (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:3).

The Bible reveals everything that God requires in order for man to live in hope of eternal life.

What Do You Think About The Church?

That is certainly a probing question, isn't it? Now when we think about it, we certainly need to understand what we are talking about.

First, I'm not talking about an organized group of people who make rules and regulations for others to live by. Not an ecclesiastical order set forth by men and for men.

Second, neither am I talking about a group of organized worshippers that meet several times each week, just for the purpose of worship.

Third, I'm not talking about a certain set of plans and programs for people, to keep them involved in what they might call Christianity.

Well, then, what about the church? We need to realize that the church is not an institution, but rather an organism. It is the body of Christ, Ephesians 1:22-23. Now we need to understand that it is not "like" the body, but rather that it "IS" the body.

If that is understood, then all should seek his/her function as a part of that organism. Read Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. Whether highly visible or not visible at all, every member of the body has a function to perform. If functioning properly, the body is healthy and will grow. If not, then it will become sick and weak.

Have you thought about your function in the church? What about your part in the body of Christ?

What do you think about the church?
--Edwin Myers

Because God has revealed Himself to man through nature and the Bible, the question, "What can man do?" is appropriate. God has done His part in making Himself and His Will known; He has reached down to man -- to you. Will you reach up to take His hand? He beckons you to accept His revelation and submit to His will. The book of Acts provides many examples of how people accepted God's grace, and gave themselves over wholly to His service. Briefly, the divine plan stipulates that you: (1) realize you have sinned (Romans 3:23); (2) believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He died to take those sins away (John 3:16; 8:24); (3) repent, i.e., experience sorrow for your sins and quit practicing unrighteousness (Acts 2:38; 17:30); (4) confess your faith to others (Matthew 10:32); (5) submit to God's command of baptism (be immersed in water) for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16). At this point you will be cleansed from your sins by Jesus' blood (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16). If you will love, trust, and obey God throughout the rest of your life, you will enjoy salvation now and eternal life in heaven. Why not do it today?

--Via Reasoning from Revelation,
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Montgomery, AL 36117-2752.

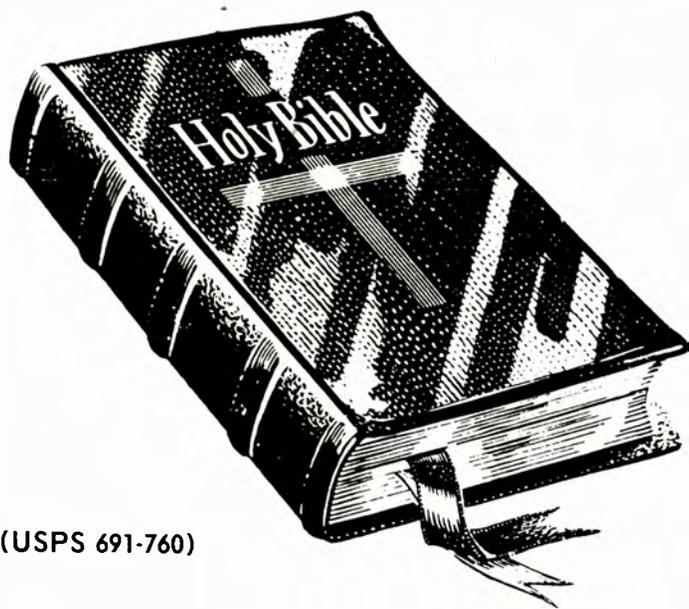
If At First You Don't Succeed. . .

Guess who, at the age of:

- 22 Failed in business
- 23 Ran for legislature and was defeated
- 24 Again failed in business
- 25 Elected to legislature
- 26 Sweetheart died
- 27 Had a nervous breakdown
- 29 Was defeated for speaker of the legislature
- 31 Was defeated for Elector
- 34 Was defeated for Congress
- 37 Was Elected to Congress
- 46 Was defeated for Senate
- 47 Was defeated for Vice-President
- 49 Was defeated for Senate
- 51 Was elected President of the United States?

Abraham Lincoln! What if he had quit?

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Hebrews 12:1-3)



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Word Of Tru

Of

"I am not mad, most noble•Fe
Words of Truth and soberness."

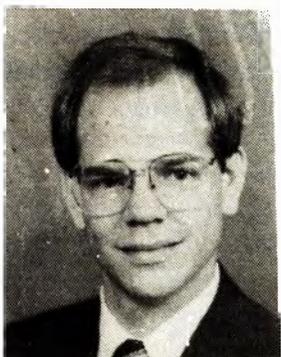
forth the
Acts 26:25

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NUMBER 7

The Value Of Biblical Confidence



Brad. T. Bromling

The debate has raged, and the truth has been victorious. The failings of agnosticism have been boldly and rightly broadcast to the church over the last decade. Now is the time to bring the controversy down from philosophical and polemic planes, to the practical level. Once we concede that a man can know with certainty whereof he speaks in religion, what then? What is the value of this ability to know? Truly, this capacity should provide the Christian with a measure of assurance (a **biblical confidence**, as it were) that has down-to-earth value. This article is an endeavor to show that biblical confidence is of practical merit in a personal way.

"I know that my Redeemer lives and ever prays for me . . ." is an expression of confidence that escapes the agnostic. If one cannot know if he knows the truth relative to the existence of God, the deity of Christ, and the salvation that is provided by the atoning death of Jesus on the cross, then where is the assurance? Agnosticism can offer none. But, John affirms the Christian's assurance: "We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. this is the true God and eternal life" (I John 5:18-20). The hope we place in this Son is a sure and steadfast anchor for our souls (Hebrews 6:19).

The absence of biblical confidence leads one to a kind of self-reliance that in times of distress leaves him spiritually destitute. When one's limitations let him down, as they so often do, to where may one turn who has not the ability to ascertain truth? Can he go to a God who "may" or "may not" exist? Can he turn to a book that "may" or "may not" be the

words of that God? Can he really find a friend in a Jesus who "may" or "may not" have been victorious over the same trials and temptations? What about when one finds himself in the pit of gloom and disaster? It was no agnostic who stood confidently on the creaking deck of the ill-fated Alexandrian ship and said, ". . . I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar, and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you. Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me" (Acts 27:22-25). Is not the fact that there is a God in heaven who cares for the souls of men a powerful assurance that is able to buoy up the sinking ship of life? Where is the victory for the Christian defeated by cancer if the hope of eternal life is based solely upon "probability?" There is no comfort in thinking that our beloved brothers and sisters who have died in the faith will "probably" go into the presence of a God who may, in fact, not exist!

What about freedom from all the scourge of sin? Although one may acknowledge that sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus, a sense of personal guilt often lingers. The belief that the God who removes sin only "probably" exists is an

impotent eraser to remove the soul's stains of guilt. Man is not left to flounder in such insecurity, for salvation is spoken of in terms of surety: "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (I Peter 1:22, 23). This solid security reaches even to the preventive level. The God Who does exist has promised to provide a way of escape in every episode of temptation (I Corinthians 10:13). He has given His solemn word that He will in no wise fail us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)! These words express the value of biblical confidence in the personal lives of those who will commit themselves to God's care.

The God Who does exist has promised to provide a way of escape in every episode of temptation.

--Via Reasoning from Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

Adam, A Type Of Christ

W. Gaddys Roy

(Editor's note: This is the first installment in a series of articles by brother W. Gaddys Roy from his new book, Types and Shadows soon to be published. Our thanks to brother Roy for allowing us to publish these advance articles).

The person, office and work of Christ were not only predicted by the prophets, but there were many types that foreshadowed Christ and His glorious work. Paul referred to Adam as a figure of Christ (Romans 5:14). Paul also called Adam and Christ the first and last Adam, and the first and second man (I Corinthians 15:45-49). With such

references made to Christ we would expect there to be an analogy between Adam and Christ, even though the points would not perfectly represent Christ.

Observe some points of comparison. Both came into existence by a biological miracle. Adam was created. God created Adam from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7; 5:1, 2). Jesus was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25). Adam had no wife at first (Genesis 2:20). Christ had no church (bride) during His personal ministry (Matthew 16:18).

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and

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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The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Mixed Messages #1



David Wade

The February-March 1992 edition of *Modern Maturity* (a publication of the American Association of Retired Persons) contains an interesting article under the above title by Michael Massing.

He is a journalist and a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities at New York

University, and is writing a book about the war on drugs. The article cites many inconsistencies of government efforts in the war on drugs. We shall note a few of the examples and statistics he offers.

Perhaps you have noticed the new wave of anti-drug ads featuring a man diving into an empty pool, a mother mourning her dead son, or an egg frying in the skillet. These vividly portray what heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and other drugs of abuse do to people. These commercials fade only to be replaced by some sporting event sponsored by beer, or other alcoholic products. Many such double standards regarding licit and illicit drugs pervade American Society.

When Atlanta Braves outfielder Otis Nixon failed his drug test he was immediately suspended for 60 days. When Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Len Dykstra totaled his car after a night of drinking, he was not even fined.

Cocaine, crack, and heroin claim about 7,000 American lives annually; and by contrast alcohol claims 100,000. Someone is killed by a drunk driver every 24 minutes and more than 540,000 people are injured by alcohol related accidents every year. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates that alcohol-related problems cost our nation \$86 billion annually.

The alcohol industry spends almost \$2 billion annually on advertising with beer companies spending \$675 million, most of it on TV ads that appear during sporting events. These ads are aimed primarily at young people who constitute a large segment of the viewing audience. It should come as no surprise that Spuds McKenzie -- Anheuser-Busch's "party animal" became a cult figure on college campuses. The company is now promoting "Bud Man," a cuddly caped character that seems right out of the comic book.

The legal minimum drinking age is now 21 in all 50 states. According to a recent HHS report about 8 million American junior and senior high students use alcohol weekly, with more than 450,000

"binge" drinkers consuming an average of 15 alcoholic drinks every week.

Needless to say, we are facing enormous problems with alcohol abuse. While our efforts in eradicating the illicit drugs must be increased, we must not overlook the larger problem that goes largely unnoticed.

In view of these statistics, the Christian who argues that social drinking is "OK" ought to hang his head in shame. Lest we forget, let's be reminded of God's warnings recorded in his inspired Holy Writ. "Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

"Who has woe?

Who has sorrow?

Who has contentions?

Who has complaints?

Who has wounds without cause?

Who has redness of eyes?

Those who linger long at the wine,

Those who go in search of mixed wine.

Do not look on the wine when it is red,

When it sparkles in the cup,

When it swirls around smoothly;

At the last it bites like a serpent,

And stings like a viper.

Your eyes will see strange things,

And your heart will utter perverse things.

Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,

Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying:

"They have struck me,

but I was not hurt;

They have beaten me,

but I did not feel it.

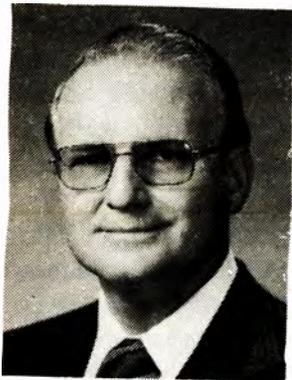
When shall I awake,

that I may seek another drink?" (Proverbs 23:29-35).

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, or adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor DRUNKARDS, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Think For Yourself



Bobby Key

Most of us are content to let others do our thinking. Often a very few individuals do the thinking for the majority. Many are blind followers of the blind, going along with little thought as to where they are being led. Cattle are easily stampeded; people who do not think are easily carried away on waves of

passion or excitement. In an emergency, one level-headed person, who is able to think, may save a number of lives.

Mental interia is the curse of our time. Thought is the only process of finding ways and means of improvement, and yet the lazy mind is content to let things ride.

Mental interia is the curse of our time. Thought is the only process of finding ways and means of improvement, and yet the lazy mind is content to let things ride.

A small group controls everything you see on television and read in the newspapers. This trend is also true in the political, educational, and social environment. Unfortunately, this is also true in the church. Generally our great brotherhood is influenced by a few. We come to see things through the eyes of some intelligent person who can think for himself and express himself fluently.

We encourage our readers to be individuals -- to

What If Jesus Were To Be On Trial Today?



Don Williams

If Jesus Christ were to appear in court and be tried today, what would the outcome be?

In our present court system, jurors are summoned to sit on a panel. They are all asked to affirm that they will answer all questions from the judge and the attorneys truthfully and to the best of their ability. Jurors are then asked to affirm that, if they are selected for a jury, they will listen to the evidence given and they will render an impartial and unbiased verdict. Various questions are asked by the state prosecuting attorney, as well as the attorney for the defense. If Jesus were on trial, and the question was asked, what is your relationship to the one on trial, how could you truthfully respond? There would be many who might think themselves to be in close association with our Lord, when in fact they are not. Jesus talked of friendship when he said, "ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). Although many would claim allegiance and friendship with our Lord, if the truth were known,

For the second time in two years, I have been summoned to be on jury duty. Not having been in court before these summons, it has been interesting to me to see how our judicial system works. As I was driving back home from court, I thought of this question --

If Jesus Christ were to

they would actually be his enemy, because of their attractions to and friendships with the world (James 4:4).

Another question that is often asked by lawyers is, what knowledge do you have of this man who is on trial before you? Again, there would be many who would claim intimate, first-hand, "perfect knowledge of that Way" (Acts 24:22), when in fact that would not be the case. Jesus talked of some in his day who thought they followed him in this way -- "this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). He spoke of other supposed followers when he exclaimed, "and why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Could we give enough evidence in our life to prove that we were a follower of his, well acquainted with his beliefs and his way of life?

Several questions are usually asked by the attorneys to see if there is any bias or prejudice concerning the person being tried, or the crime that he has allegedly committed. Would we be struck from the jury panel because we were found to be prejudiced in favor of Jesus Christ? Someone might easily respond in the affirmative, but we must remember that two of his twelve disciples rejected him, one denying him, the other betraying him. We can sing "All to Jesus I surrender" all we want to but if we do not live out our love for him daily, then in essence we deny and betray Jesus by not living as we say we live.

If Jesus were on trial today, would he be found

innocent of any sinful charges brought forth against him? I believe so. But perhaps, the more relevant question is this, if charges of being a "faithful child of God" were brought forth against us, would there be enough evidence gathered against us to convict us?

If charges of being a "faithful child of God" were brought forth against us, would there be enough evidence gathered against us to convict us?

--Guin Church of Christ, Guin, Alabama.

Think For Yourself

Continued From Page 2

think for themselves, to not be carried away by every wind of doctrine, to stand for their convictions at all times regardless of the opposition. Take your Bible and read and study it for yourself. We are persuaded that all are able to understand what God's will is. Things that have the most to do with salvation are easily understood by the individual who honestly opens his Bible and studies for himself.

The mind is an awful thing to waste. When one fails to think for himself he is gullible to any false teacher. This is the reason television evangelists have such followings. Most who listen week after week and send their money have never learned how to think for themselves. The more eager a soul is for salvation, the more gullible he often will be. He hungrily and humbly reaches out to any teacher, any teaching, any institution that seems able to point him in the direction of heaven. The Holy Spirit warns us: "Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1.) The thinking person will not decide on an issue too rapidly. He will not be too easily satisfied. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," is good advice.

It is amazing how gullible one becomes when he wants something badly. A young person buying his first used car, wants a car so much that he easily becomes a sucker, a victim of anyone who would impose on his gullibility.

The poor thinker, the wrong-headed thinker, the non-thinker is always annoyed or irritated at any one who brings proof that he is wrong. His egoism or opinion often kills his ability to think. There is neither glory or wisdom in traveling the wrong direction.

In every generation men have attempted to substitute human reason for Divine Revelation. The truth does not need to be sifted through me to be truth. I am not infallible but the Bible is infallible. We must be governed by the Word of God in matters of faith. In matters of opinion we leave men free to exercise their liberty of choice. We dare not bind what God has loosed. We refuse to be governed by human laws. Neither will we loose what God has bound (Matthew 16:19).

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Adam, A Type Of Christ

Continued From Page 1

while he slept, God took a rib from his side with which He made woman that Adam might have a bride (Genesis 2:21, 22). The church was established after Jesus died on the cross (Ephesians 2:15). After Jesus was dead, while still on the cross, His side was pierced, and His blood with which He purchased the church was poured out (John 19:33, 34; Acts 20:28). Therefore, as Adam suffered his side to be opened that he might have a wife, Christ suffered his side to be opened, and gave Himself for the church (John 19:33; Ephesians 5:25).

Adam awoke and was revived after the rib was taken from his side (Genesis 2:21-24). Christ arose from the dead after His blood had been poured out (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:4).

The creation of Eve was a biological miracle, but all since have been from corruptible seed by the law of propagation (Genesis 1:27; 2:21-24; I Peter 1:21). The church was established by miraculous power (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15). All now must enter the church or kingdom by the law of conversion (Romans 1:16; Acts 3:19). All must be born again by incorruptible seed, which is the Word of God (I Peter 1:23; John 3:5; Romans 8:14).

God blessed Adam and Eve and commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:27). Likewise, the church is to bear fruit, that is, to make converts (John 15:1-6, Romans 7:4).

Children who were born into Adam's family were

not born full-grown. Likewise, we enter into God's spiritual family by a new birth which is a spiritual birth (John 3:5). We begin as babes at the new birth, and we must grow. Proper food must be provided for physical growth. Even so, proper food must be provided for growth in the church (I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18).

Adam had but one wife, and he was the head of his wife who was called by his name (Genesis 5:1, 2; Matthew 19:4-6). Jesus built but one church, and of course, He is the head of His church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23). His disciples are called Christians (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). This is the new name that Isaiah said God's people would be called (Isaiah 62:2). This is the only new name in the New Testament by which God's people are called.

Adam brought physical death upon all, and all will be raised by Christ -- the second Adam (I Corinthians 15:20-23). We are all now in the image of Adam (I Corinthians 15:49). We will be in the image of Christ after the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:46-49).

Such, then are some of the more striking points of resemblance between Adam and Christ and should increase our faith in Christ and the Bible.

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Are We (The Churches Of Christ) Narrow-Minded?



W. A. Holley

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

The word "narrow" comes from the Greek (Stenos), an adjective, here used figuratively, "of the gate which provides the entrance to eternal life, "narrow" because it runs counter to natural inclinations, and "the way" is similarly characterized." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, p. 426).

Many of our religious friends assert that we, members of the churches of Christ, are far too narrow in our approach to the teaching of the Holy Bible. What does "narrow-minded" mean? It means "lacking in tolerance or breadth of vision" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). Are we too narrow-minded when measured by God's standard? (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19).

Contrary to what many of our religious neighbors may think, we do not wish to be intolerant of their views; rather, we are willing to grant them any rights we claim for ourselves. Only in matters of "thus saith the Lord" must we be firm and unyielding (Jude 3; John 8:30-32; 17:17). Neither Jesus nor Paul deliberately antagonized their hearers, but their teaching stirred up much prejudiced hostility and animosity against them, which led to their persecution and death.

Contrary to what many of our religious neighbors may think, we do not wish to be intolerant of their views; rather, we are willing to grant them any rights we claim for ourselves. Only in matters of "thus saith the Lord" must we be firm and unyielding (Jude 3; John 8:30-32; 17:17).

Was God narrow-minded when He cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden? (Genesis 3:1-6). Was God unloving and unkind when he destroyed the wicked world of the antediluvians? (Genesis 6:1 ff). Should we come to the conclusion that God was unfair when he destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wicked and unholy conduct? (Genesis 19:1 ff). It is a sin to charge God foolishly (Job 1:22). Was God narrow-minded when He slew Nadab and Abihu for their transgression? (Leviticus 10:1-2).

Was God mean-spirited when He reprimanded Moses for taking too much honor to himself, rather

than speaking to the rock as he was commanded? (Numbers 20:1-13; cf. Exodus 17:5-7). Moses' sin was one of the tongue. A fine commentary on this point is found in Psalm 106:32-33. Thus Moses was forbidden entrance into the Land of Canaan, later he tried to change God's mind about this matter, but God said, "Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter" (Deuteronomy 3:25-26). The lesson is -- what God has commanded stands . . . His will is not to be altered (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32).

Was Jesus narrow-minded when he said, ". . . Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-42, 47; 20:28). Do you know about the New Testament church? Can it be identified today? Is it possible for one to be a member of that church which was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection? (Acts 2:36-38, 41-47). Is it a sin to tell people that Jesus established but one church, and that denominationalism came hundreds of years too late to be the church that one reads about in the Bible?? (Ephesians 4:4-6; 1:23-23; Colossians 1:18, 23).

Is it a sin ". . . to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Was God narrow-minded when Ananias and Sapphira were slain because they lied about how much they gave unto the Lord? (Acts 5:1-11). Does not God have a standard or a pattern by which men and women are to abide? (Hebrews 8:5; I Timothy 1:16; Titus 2:7). God has set forth His guidelines designed to lead Christians in their giving to Him. Notice the words, prosper (I Corinthians), purpose, (II Corinthians 9:6-7), and ability (Acts 11:29-30). Do not we give to God what He has already given to us? (I Chronicles 29:9-19). Those who give grudgingly and unwillingly might as well end their pretense.

Are we as members of the church of Christ being uncharitable and unchristian, when we insist on preaching the full and complete gospel of God? It is true that John 3:16 is a part of Jesus' message to sinners, what about Mark 16:16? This verse reads, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Is this verse true? Why do many denominational preachers reject this verse, even trying to remove it from the Biblical text? For example, Reverend W. A. Criswell, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, is quoted as saying: ". . . He doesn't believe that every word of the Bible is inspired . . . I very much am a believer in textual criticism. As such, I think the last half of the 16th chapter of Mark is hearsay, it's not inspired, it's just concocted." (Birmingham News, 08/09/1991). An honest confession from a Baptist preacher!! Perhaps this explains why Billy Graham and other denominational preachers never preach Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21; Romans

6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27. They do not believe the passages mentioned above.

The authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 has never been questioned by true Bible scholars. The only question that has ever been raised has been with reference to its genuineness, whether it was written by Mark, or by some other inspired man. For example forty-seven Bible scholars put it in the King James Bible. One hundred and one Bible scholars put it in the American Standard Version. We can have the fullest confidence the Spirit breathed, inerrant, infallible word of God (I Corinthians 2:10-13; II Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 3). It is a shame for preachers to destroy the peoples' faith and confidence in God's holy word!!

We, members of the church of Christ, are not being unkind and unconcerned when we try to show people the difference between truth and error (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; I John 4:6; John 8:30-32; 17:17).

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

A Parent's Prayer

I pray that I may let my child live his own life and not the one I wish I had lived. Therefore, guard me against burdening him with doing what I failed to do.

Help me to see his missteps today in perspective against the long road he must travel and grant me the grace to be patient with his slow pace.

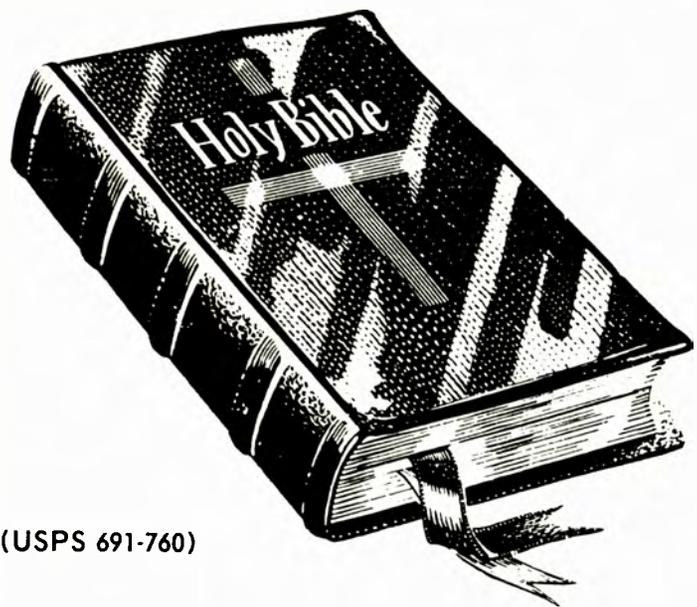
Give me the wisdom to know when to smile at the small mischiefs of his age and when to show firmness against the impulses which he fears and cannot handle.

Help me to hear the anguish in his heart through the din of angry words or across the gulf of brooding silence. And having heard, grant me the ability to bridge the gap between us, with understanding.

I pray that I may raise my voice more in joy at what he is, than vexation at what he is not, so that each day he may grow in sureness of himself.

Help me to regard him with genuine affection so he will feel affection for others. Then give me the strength, Oh Lord, to free him so he can move strongly on his way.

--Submitted by Ted West



(USPS 691-760)

Word Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Fes
Words of Truth and soberness."

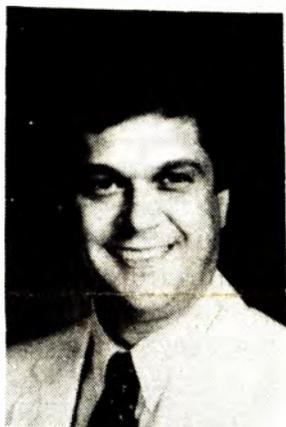
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VOLUME 28

FEBRUARY 21, 1992

NUMBER 8

Family Duties To The Aging



Al Price

(Editor's note: Al Price is associate professor of sociology and gerontology at Freed-Hardeman University).

The family, like the church, has specific responsibilities to its senior members. More and more the family must become involved in providing for their

needs because of the limitations of other institutions and agencies to deal with the dramatic increase in the numbers of the aging. More than 27 million Americans are over age 65, and the prospects are that by the turn of the century one in six persons will be over 65.

The form of the human survival curve is becoming more rectangular. This means an increasing period of vitality in later life. The present trends in mortality indicate that nearly all individuals are surviving to advanced ages and then succumb rather abruptly over a narrow age range centering at about age 85. These are vital human beings with the same basic needs of people at other ages. Additionally, they have some special and unique needs that must be addressed.

Often the church is slow in developing an adequate elder ministry offering programs and services that can make life meaningful and productive in one's later years. Therefore, the family must assume a basic responsibility.

Honor. "Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise" (Ephesians 6:2 NASB). We do not honor our older family members by relegating them to a back room, a shelf, a pasture, out of mind and out of sight.

The fact that one reaches 65, 75 or 85 does not mean that that individual is any less a member of society or the family. We must not fail to touch, show respect to, talk to, embrace and enjoy the

things out of pity but because of our interest and concern for all people regardless of age.

Our aging family members are speaking a message that needs to be heard. They are saying: "I'm not a senior citizen; I'm a seasoned citizen. I'm still a worthy person with feelings and needs. Stop wringing your hands, and open your hands. There is still a lot of tough fiber in our minds and our hands that have seen so much experience."

"I'm not a senior citizen; I'm a seasoned citizen. I'm still a worthy person with feelings and needs. Stop wringing your hands, and open your hands. There is still a lot of tough fiber in our minds and our hands that have seen so much experience."

Perhaps we should remember the words of the psalmist who wrote, "Do not cast me off in the time of old age" (Psalm 71:9).

Adequate living arrangements. While He was hanging on the cross, Jesus made provisions for His aging mother (John 19:25-27). Most older persons do not want to impose on their children by living with them, but understandably, they do want to be near them. Remaining independent in one's own home or apartment is important, and home health care services may assist one in this regard. Family members may help simplify the housing environment so it can be more easily manipulated.

Because of health and other factors, it may be necessary for other housing to be arranged as long as the feelings of the elder family member are respected. These alternatives may include apartment complexes designed especially for seniors, life-care communities, and institutional

Daily needs. The apostles thought the congregational meals program sponsored by the church in Jerusalem was important enough that seven full-time servants were placed in charge. The "Hellenistic widows" are mentioned specifically as an age category served (Acts 6:1-6).

Families may assist by providing needed transportation, hot nutritious meals, protection from victimization, adequate income, and any other basic need involved in the circumstances of their lives. Older family members should have a life situation that allows for self-actualization instead of a life that constantly is concerned about basic survival.

Productive use of experience. Older men and older women are admonished by Paul to be examples in commendable traits and active in using their experience for "teaching what is good" (Titus 2:3). Wise is the family that encourages all its members to learn from the wisdom and experience of its older members. Family heritage and identity may be more appreciated by knowing its past. Much space is taken up in the Bible with relating family lineage. Many practical and useful skills and much sound advice may be learned from the shared experiences of our seniors (1 Timothy 5:10).

Stewardship of resources. It should be a primary concern of all to be trustworthy stewards (1 Corinthians 4:2). This is especially applicable as one plans for the disposition of their resources while they live and upon their death. We are responsible to God to use what we have accumulated to His glory and for His cause.

Family members or others never should be guilty of devouring widows' houses (Matthew 23:14). One's financial and material resources should be disposed of based on the will of the older person and not at the will of unscrupulous and selfish family members. Sound legal counsel should be sought in the process of protecting resources and

Continued On Page 2

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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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ensuring their use for "good works."

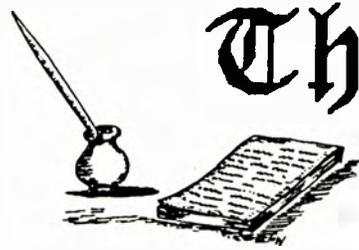
Social interaction. It is pure religion to "visit . . . widows in their distress" (James 1:27). While this involves more than a friendly visit, it is nevertheless true that God made us social and gave us two social institutions -- the church and the family -- in which social needs may be met. Through this vital interaction with others, we edify and motivate each other for living. This mutual strength and encouragement make life worth living and reinforce the values and beliefs that are important.

Loss of spouse, friends and jobs can lead to pervasive loneliness that characterizes many older persons. Despair and depression lead to many undesirable traits that result in mental and physical problems and an early death. Family members should provide for a solid network of social contacts.

Spiritual maintenance. Jesus teaches us that our religious faith should be maintained "to the end" (Matthew 10:22). It is possible for that faith to be lost or greatly weakened as one experiences severe stresses of living in later life. Ideally, one's faith should be stronger and more vibrant than ever as one faces the prospects of his homecoming with God.

The family may do much to encourage that faith and hope by their own example of faithfulness and providing for various types of spiritual activities in which the older relative may participate

--Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee 38540.



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.

The 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. He carved her a pair of wooden feet, and a pair of

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

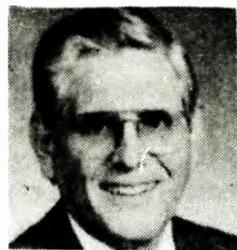
princess wore a

crutches and presented them to her. And "she kissed the hand that held the ax."

The story is 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 Goats Have Brains?



W. T. Allison

Do goats have any brains? Sometimes they have more than human beings, especially when human beings are governed by pure selfishness. Two goats met one another upon a narrow plank across a river, so they could not pass without one causing the other to fall into the river. If they were human, they would have argued who had the right to the narrow bridge. But the goats figured it all out, how one could help the other and the same time help himself. One lay down and let the other walk over it. Human beings deprive an intelligent

person of as much intelligence as a goat has.

Satan, sin and self are inseparable partners in the sin problem. Satan, the arch-enemy of God, seeks to turn all men from their Creator. From the Garden of Eden to the present world, the wicked one has accomplished this by selfishness. Man has become proud and arrogant. He eliminates God from his life because Satan has led him to believe that he does not need God. To enslave man to himself, Satan offers numerous pleasures which, by nature, are contrary to God's will. Thus, Satan is the cause, self is the means, and sin is the power of man's alienation from God.

Self is the dominant factor in sin. Between Satan

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Noah, A Type Of Christ

W. Gaddys Roy

*(Editor's note: This is the second installment in a series of articles from his new book *Types and Shadows* soon to be published).*

Many men of the Old Testament had many striking resemblances or characteristics of Christ, even though the Bible may not call them types. Noah is no exception, and we shall give some of the similarities between Noah and Christ.

Noah signifies comfort or rest, and it was said of him, "The same shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands . . ." (Genesis 5:29). Jesus was to bring consolation to Israel and rest to a guilty world that was burdened with sin (Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 2:25; Revelation 14:13).

Noah was a righteous man and walked with God (Genesis 6:9). He led his family in righteousness (Genesis 7:1, 7; Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:20, 21). Jesus was righteous. He did no sin (Hebrews 7:26; 4:15; I Peter 2:22). Jesus came to earth to do God's will (John 6:38). In doing God's will, Jesus gave a perfect example as He leads God's family in paths of righteousness (I Peter 2:21; Hebrews 2:13; 3:6).

Noah was a preacher of righteousness (I Peter 3:18-21; II Peter 2:5). He also persevered in self-denial as he carried out God's will and prophesied

of God's vengeance upon the sinful world (Genesis 6; I Peter 3:18-21; II Peter 2:5). There has been no greater ethical standard of right living than was presented by Jesus in His sermon on the mount (Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7). He prophesied of God's vengeance upon sinful man (Mark 9:43-48; 16:16; Luke 13:3, 5). As a result of the preaching and the good that Jesus did, He was crucified and therefore endured the agony of the cross (Mark 14:34; John 10:17-18; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Noah built the ark according to the pattern which God gave him (Genesis 6:14-22). Jesus built only one church and He built it according to the pattern (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18; John 4:34; 6:38; Hebrews 8:5).

All who failed to heed Noah's message were lost in the flood (Genesis 7:21-23; II Peter 2:5). All who reject Christ and the great salvation which He brought to mankind are lost and will be punished in eternity (Matthew 7:21-27; Mark 16:16; Acts 3:22, 23; Hebrews 2:3).

Another striking analogy between Noah and Jesus is that they were both priests. Noah offered every clean animal and every clean bird as a burnt-offering, and God was pleased with the offering

(Genesis 8:20, 21). Jesus is our priest and He offered Himself without spot unto God for the sins of the people of the world (Zechariah 6:12, 13; Hebrews 4:15).

Those who reject Christ as their king and priest today have no right to offer prayers unto God. They are lost in sin as much as the people in the days of Noah were lost in the flood.

Those who reject Christ as their king and priest today have no right to offer prayers unto God. They are lost in sin as much as the people in the days of Noah were lost in the flood.

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Do Goats Have Brains?

Continued From Page 2

and sin stands self. Self makes every decision in the sin question. From self proceeds every sin. Sometimes it is something you do and other times it is something you think. Satan knows how to use other people to make you sin and thus become alienated from God.

To enslave man to himself, Satan offers numerous pleasures which, by nature, are contrary to God's will. Thus, Satan is the cause. self is the means. and sin is the power of man's alienation from God.

What are we going to do when we meet face to face with a situation and there is no turning around? The answer is to humble ourselves and "esteem others higher than ourselves." When self is seeking recognition, we will always meet those who do not think we are as great as we KNOW we are. This is sure to create a problem between us. Self has gotten in the way. It's amazing how much we can accomplish as long as we don't care who gets the praise . . . just as long as God gets the glory.

--1901 Schillinger Rd., Mobile, AL 36695.

"Guilty . . . Or Not Guilty"?



Don Williams

For five days recently, I have had the opportunity of serving in jury duty in Marion County. Although not an expert in courtroom procedure, I have come to the conclusion that "courtroom life" is not nearly as dramatic and glamorous as the TV shows "Matlock" or "Perry Mason"

make it out to be. The judge and lawyers are real people -- they sometimes forget the names of people, and even all the legal jargon is not always professionally used. This courtroom experience has caused me to appreciate our judicial system even more than I had before. Incidentally, the year of 1991 marked the two hundredth anniversary of our Bill of Rights. Included within this document is the right that we have to have our legal problems brought before a judge and jury.

I did not serve as a juror on any case, even though I was a part of the jury panel that could be selected. On one day, as we were waiting for one trial to end and another jury to be selected for the next case, I heard the culmination of the present trial. The jury had reached their decision. They came in, handing their verdict to the judge, and then the judge read the verdict: "We find the defendant, _____, not guilty!" I watched the defendant, looking for any visible sign of relief or happiness, but there was nothing. Even his family

did not show any gladness as they left the courtroom. I think that if I had been on trial, and that would have happened to me, I would have shown a great deal of relief (I hope I never get to that point).

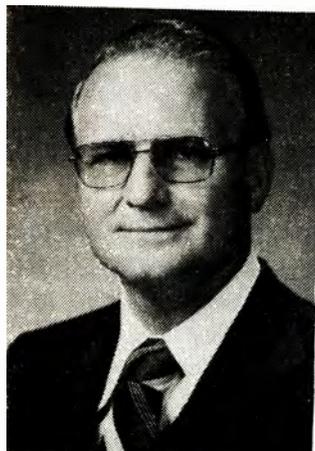
On another case, the jury was in the process of being selected when the lawyer for the state asked for the dismissal charges against the person he was prosecuting. A key witness in the case did not show up (this was the second time the case had come up), and so the judge dismissed the charges. Although she was presumed innocent until proven guilty, you can imagine that she was happy about her case not going to trial, and indeed she was.

I later reflected on these experiences and the coming Day of Judgement. On that day, we will not stand before an impartial jury of men and women. Some of them, at best, might be partial or biased to the problems that had come into our lives. Instead, we will stand before the impartial, unbiased Son of Man, Jesus Christ. He will have been well acquainted with this way of life, having lived upon earth perfectly (Hebrews 4:15). Most earthly judges are fair and honest, but on this day we will stand before the righteous judge (II Timothy 4:8). Psalm 89:14 tells of his qualities. "Justice and Judgement are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." His verdict will be fair, impartial, and just.

There will be no dismissals or cases cancelled because of legal technicalities on that day. Jesus will have all evidence at his disposal. According to Revelation 20:12, the books will be opened on that day. "The books" refer to the Word of God (John

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The Cost Of One Boy



Bobby Key

When a boy thrusts his hand in yours, you never know what to expect. It may be smeared from his latest sandwich, or moist from the tadpoles and wiggletails he has just been catching. Whatever its condition, remember it is the hand of the future! Someday this hand may hold a

Bible behind a pulpit, or a revolver in some dark alley. It may be the skilled hand of a surgeon, or the cunning hand of a gambler. It may be steady and true as it moves the controls of some scientific instrument, or shake uncontrollably as it grasps the bottle or needle.

Someday this hand may hold a Bible behind a pulpit, or a revolver in some dark alley. It may be the skilled hand of a surgeon, or the cunning hand of a gambler. It may be steady and true as it moves the controls of some scientific instrument, or shake uncontrollably as it grasps the bottle or needle. That hand is now in yours.

That hand is now in yours. It represents a man to be petitioning you for guidance in the right way. A father can have no greater privilege or responsibility. A mother can know no higher achievement or joy. A Christian can experience no higher call.

Years ago a rough boy attended a Sunday School class, and made things tough for the teacher, disrupting the entire class. The man attempting to teach the class said curtly to the young intruder, "There's the street. Go, and never come back to this Sunday School."

The boy never returned, but the world heard from him again. He began a career of crime and bloodshed that has seldom been equaled. Before a theater entrance in Chicago his body was riddled with bullets. In one of the Chicago papers, a most unusual picture appeared -- only the feet of the dead desperado showed. A caption under the picture was brief: "These are the feet of John Dillinger!" The editorial comment added, "Who knows where these feet might have gone had someone guided them aright."

A teenaged boy walked up to his father and said with deep earnestness, "Dad, if you don't do something to help me, I'm going to commit suicide tonight."

The father who had been busy making money and looking after his vast interests was astonished and stunned to know that anything was wrong with his son. The boy told his father of his venture into sin, and that he had contacted a dread social disease as the result.

The young man was sent that same day to a hospital for treatment. The doctor believed that he was cured and sent him home. The Bible, however, reminds us of the law of reaping what we sow. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh

reap corruption," (Galatians 6:8).

What we sow in our early years, we may expect to reap in our later years. The teenager under consideration later married a beautiful girl, who gave birth to a son. The young wife died in childbirth, and the young father, already overwhelmed with grief at the loss of his wife had to bear the tragic news that his baby son was deficient both physically and mentally. In desperation he picked up a revolver and took his own life.

The baby lived. He stood one day in a long line of people in Buffalo, NY, waiting to shake the hand of the president of the United States, William McKinley. As he grasped the hand of the president, he drew a pistol and took the president's life. Not long afterward, he was tried, found guilty, and executed.

The grim octopus of tragedy had tentacles that reached the lives of many people and brought sorrow and disappointment to an entire nation. It was caused by the failure of someone, sometime, somewhere, to reach a teenage boy with hope and help.

When parents fail in their parental responsibilities, they set in motion a chain of events that will likely affect many generations. Entire families can be lost to Christ by the failure to properly instruct one boy or girl.

Parents, never underestimate your importance in the scheme of things.

General Douglas MacArthur prayed the following prayer after becoming a general in the United States Army. Perhaps these words will be helpful in our sober reflections about our own family.

"Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, and brave enough to face himself when he is afraid. One who will be proud and unbending in defeat, but humble and gentle in victory.

"A son whose wishbone will not be where his backbone should be; a son who will know that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge.

"Rear him, I pray, not in the paths of ease and comfort but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenges. Here let him learn to stand up in the storm; here let him learn compassion for those who fail.

"Build me a son whose heart will be clean, whose goal will be high. A son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men. One who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep. One who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

"And after all these are his, add I pray, enough of a sense of humor so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously; a touch of humility, so that he may always remember the simplicity of true greatness; the open mind of true wisdom; the meekness of true strength.

"Then, I, his father, will dare to whisper, I have not lived in vain."

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

"Guilty . . . Or Not Guilty"?

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12:48), the books of our deeds (Ecclesiastes 12:14), and the Book of Life, Heaven's roll call of the faithful (Philippians 4:3). Other books may include the various laws that mankind lived under, but this one fact cannot be over-emphasized -- Jesus will be rendering his verdict unto us, based upon perfect and complete information.

There will be no dismissals or cases cancelled because of legal technicalities on that day. Jesus will have all evidence at his disposal.

As we stand before him on that day, what will we hear? Will we hear "Not Guilty" -- that is, "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

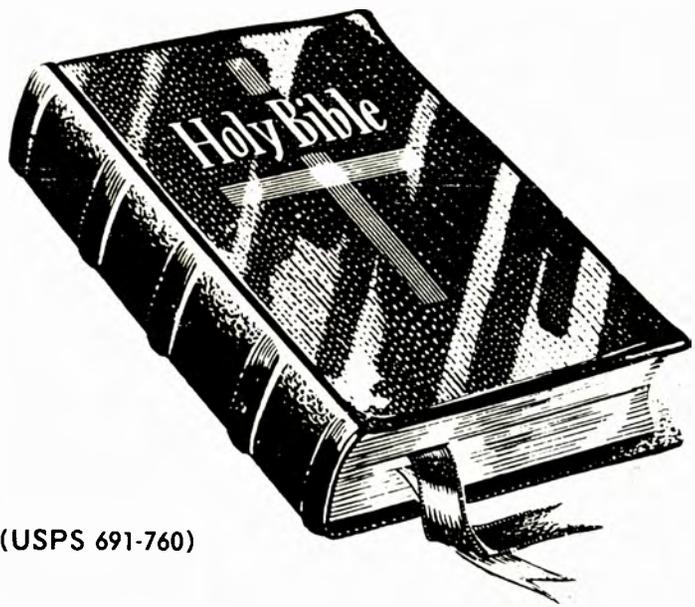
not obeying my word" -- "Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

One last thought. Someone has well stated that God votes for us, Satan votes against us, and we cast the deciding vote. Although we all know it will take the grace and mercy of God to save us (Ephesians 2:8, 9) in the end, it is true that we control our own destiny of how we want to live here so as to determine where we will spend eternity.

Someone has well stated that God votes for us, Satan votes against us, and we cast the deciding vote.

Based upon your present life, where are you living for -- heaven or hell?

--Guin Church of Christ, Guin, Alabama



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus
Words of Truth and soberness."

with the
1s 26:25

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Willing Spirits



Jerri Manasco

None of us are perfect! That should be most obvious to any honest person! We can and do make mistakes. John has said, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). Paul warns, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Solomon adds a wise comment, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). That settles that!

Jesus had to point out to his disciples that while they entertained high estimates of themselves he had an accurate evaluation of their real self! To Peter Jesus said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). What a tremendous observation Jesus made and how true that has proven over and over! In this comment Jesus is teaching that while we may have honest enough motives and sincere intentions, there is a weakness that interferes with our resolve. Peter found that out much to his sorrow, as did the other apostles. There are some sobering lessons for us as well.

In the statement Jesus made us see at least two things. First, there is something that Jesus understood: the weakness of man. Second, there is something that Peter must see: his own limitations. It will do us great good to face the same things ourselves. We must come to terms with the weaknesses that tend to get in our way.

We need to understand this principle when doing personal work. We need to be willing to contend patiently with the weakness of the flesh when we attempt to instruct others in the ways of the Lord. Some people require more encouragement than others. Some find it more difficult than others to forsake the errors of their ancestors or their own sins. Some are simply going to be faced with a greater struggle than others because of their

circumstances. It is arrogant, yea, presumptuous, on our part to disregard the feelings of those whom we teach when our prospect is one who is facing the most crucial decision of his or her life! While YOU may have found it much easier to become a Christian in the past, this new prospect may be travelling a more complicated path than you or I have ever imagined.

There are some attractions that are stronger than others in the lives of different people. That which may pose little or no problem to you or me might be the besetting sin of our friend's life! Everyone has something that can be particularly troublesome. Paul recognized this when he wrote of the necessity of his guarding his own heart (I Corinthians 9:27).

When attempting to lead someone to Jesus, try to realize that you and I may have to make great sacrifices to accomplish our task! Hear what Paul said about this: ". . . to the Jews I became as Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9:20-22). Paul learned to put himself into the other man's shoes in order to be more effective in reaching him with the gospel. He was able to understand that while there were many who were willing to obey there was still the weakness of the flesh that hindered them. Paul, accordingly, dealt with people in such a way as to break through that barrier.

Like Peter, we must be reminded that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"! We need to consider ourselves when we go about teaching or restoring others. Paul teaches us to "consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It is the spirit of meekness that must characterize our efforts (Galatians 6:1). Ours must not be the attitude, "Shame on that fallen brother! I would never do such a thing as he did!" That is exactly the same sort of attitude Peter had and that is exactly what

Jesus was dealing with when he spoke of the weakness of flesh versus willingness of spirit.

Perhaps you would never even think about committing adultery or getting drunk, but you (anyone!) might be given over to a hot temper! Perhaps you would never use God's name in vain, but you might have a fondness for pornography or questionable entertainment. Perhaps you would be shocked to see man embracing another man's wife on the street corner -- but do you do the same thing on the dance floor?! Yes, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." The problem is we cannot see our weakness as readily as we can the weakness of the other fellow.

We need to be willing to contend patiently with the weakness of the flesh when we attempt to instruct others in the ways of the Lord. Some people require more encouragement than others. Some find it more difficult than others to forsake the errors of their ancestors or their own sins.

We are not suggesting that we remain "lovingly silent" regarding others' transgressions. Sin must be recognized and labeled (Matthew 7:15-20). Sin must be rebuked and every rational effort must be made to teach and convert the erring (I Timothy 5:20; James 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1-2). Unfaithfulness must be disciplined (I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6-15). Rebukes must be administered (Galatians 2:11; II Timothy 4:2). However, none of this should be done with arrogant disregard for our own potential for sin. We simply do not know what arrow Satan will shoot toward us next (Luke 22:31-32)!

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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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The Editor's Pen
David Wade

Mixed Messages No. 2



David Wade

This theme is a continuation of my editorial dated February 14, 1992. The barrage of mixed messages with which we are inundated daily is not only obvious in alcohol abuse. Tobacco is a greater offender than alcohol in this regard.

While alcohol claims 100,000 American lives tobacco is even more deadly claiming 434,000 lives each year. In the previous editorial we noted that cocaine, crack, and heroin claim about 7,000 American lives each year. Tobacco is costly too, with some \$52 billion annually in lost productivity and health care according to the Department of Health and Human Services. By way of contrast the federal government spends less than \$20 million a year to discourage people from smoking, compared to more than \$11 billion budgeted in 1992 for the fight against illegal drugs. Meanwhile the tobacco industry spends \$3.27 billion a year in advertising and promotion, or \$9 million a day!

Cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are illegal while alcohol and tobacco are not. The point I wish to make is that while the war on illegal drugs should intensify, it is foolish to neglect the greater problems of alcohol and tobacco.

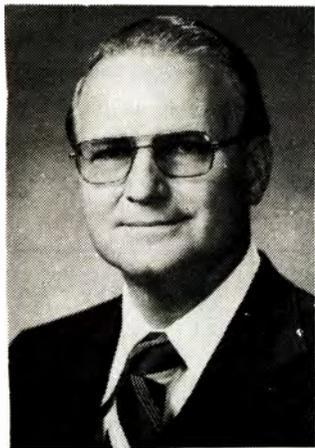
Ninety percent of all smokers take up the habit before reaching age 21. While more and more people are quitting smoking, the tobacco companies "need to get 5,600 new smokers a day just to stay even," says Phil Wilbur of the Advocacy Institute, a consumer group. "And it happens that 3,000 of these are teenagers or younger."

It is obvious that tobacco ads are aimed at the young. Camel's cigarette smoking camel drawn to look like a cartoon figure has been very successful in attracting children. Desiring to associate their products with healthy young people, tobacco companies have become avid sponsors of sporting events. The best known example is the Virginia Slims womens tennis events which enables Philip Morris to identify its product with the likes of Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova. At such events the tobacco companies place their ads in clear view of TV cameras and this becomes a convenient means of circumventing the ban on televised advertising.

Many advocacy groups are becoming more and more vocal against such mixed messages. We should hope that Bud Man and Marlboro Man become increasingly vulnerable targets.

Christians everywhere should realize the greater spiritual implications of these problems. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

What About Those Sheep?



Bobby Key

It was a sheep, not a lamb, that went astray in the parable Jesus told; it was a grown-up sheep that wandered away from the ninety and nine in the fold.

When a sheep goes astray, the lambs are sure to follow. No adult can leave the right way without talking some young person with him. When parents and

grandparents go into sin, they will not only lose their own souls, but will cause others to be lost as well.

The sheep often say, "Don't do as I do, but do as I say." Lambs do not do this, however. Young people resent the lessons we teach, if we fail to practice our own instruction. We absolutely must practice the things we teach.

"As the mother is, so is her daughter" (Ezekiel 16:44). And it is likewise true that as is the father, so the son. Children are great imitators. They usually try to be just like their parents when they are very young. If father and mother do not attend Bible Study, naturally their children will not want to attend. The things they see us doing, are the things they will be doing. There is a great responsibility connected with being a parent. Our Lord said, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

This is the tragedy of parents being unfaithful to

the Lord. They are not only placing their own souls in jeopardy, but are becoming a stumbling block to their own children who look to them for an example. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Or, as the twig is bent, so the tree is inclined.

If our children had been properly trained both by precept and example and this principle had been followed during the past quarter of a century, the congregation where you worship would most likely have twice the membership it now has. Churches of Christ are losing our young people, and have been doing so for a number of years. We must not allow this trend to continue. Like charity, evangelism must begin at home.

Yes, it was a sheep that went astray. Sheep must be careful where they walk, for the lambs will follow them. If the lambs are lost, what a terrible price the sheep will have to pay.

17th SW Miami, OK 74354.

Success



Guy F. Hester

How do you spell success? Many spell it \$ucce\$\$\$. They have the idea that if they could accumulate great wealth they would be instantly happy and would be free from problems forevermore.

The rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22); the rich farmer whose barns overflowed (Luke 12:16-21); the rich man in the story with Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), learned that true success cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents. Jesus warned, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of

The Tragedy Of Living In A Lost Condition



Bobby Duncan

(Editor's note: This fine article was published several years ago in The Visitor).

In warning the lost of the tragedy of dying in a lost condition perhaps we have left the impression that death is the only thing a lost person has to fear. Let us not overlook the tragedy of living in a lost condition. If you are lost you may live to a ripe old age, and good health and prosperity may be yours while you are doing so. In your old age you might possibly obey the gospel, and then die a faithful Christian, and go home to heaven.

Sound good? You had better take another look at it. There are some things you have overlooked.

You had better take another look at it. There are some things you have overlooked.

By living in a lost condition you will be leading others to be lost. A lady told me once that she knew what to do to be a Christian but she didn't have the heart to do it. Her children had grown up without proper teaching and were all out in the world and lost. A little girl I know asked her mother if a person had to be baptized to go to heaven. Then she asked: "Has Daddy been baptized?" When told he had not, she thought for a moment and she said quote resolutely, "Then I'm never going to be baptized."

In practically every congregation you find faithful Christians who would give all they own for the opportunity of going back and getting an earlier start -- one that would give them back their children to train them in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." These people can tell you about the tragedy of living in a lost condition.

By living in a lost condition you will be lending your influence to the cause of Satan in his fight against God. If you are not on the Lord's side you are on the Devil's side, whether you like it or not (Matthew 12:30; 6:24). You may consider yourself a pretty good fellow, but you are right now fighting against God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the church. You have taken your stand on the side of evil against all that is good.

If you should live in a lost condition you will live a life less abundant than God intended for you. In John 10:10 Jesus said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." This more abundant life involves a happier life here upon this earth, as well as life hereafter. One of the biggest lies the Devil ever told is that the sinner is happier than the Christian. Some have the idea that they want to live a little, and then obey the gospel, as if obedience to God brings an end to all happiness. Nothing could be further from the truth. A person who serves God

out of deep and abiding faith in the Bible is the happiest person in the world. He is happy because he is kept cleansed of sins through the blood of Christ (I John 1:7). Therefore he has hope beyond the grave and is not afraid to die. He is happy because God hears his prayers and answers them (Matthew 7:7-11). He is happy because he has the assurance that all things work together for his good (Romans 8:28). Those who are lost are living in fear of death, without God to hear his prayers, and with no assurance that God will overrule to their benefit anything that happens.

By living lost you will harden your heart (Hebrews 3:7-8, 12; I Timothy 4:2). Each time you reject heaven's invitation your heart becomes a little more hardened against God and his will. As time goes by you will reach the point that the preaching of the gospel has no appeal at all to you. It is a known fact that each time one says no to a proposition, it becomes easier to say no the next time. Every gospel preacher has had the experience

of seeing some who were so tenderhearted they would weep during the sermons and invitation song, but would not obey the gospel. As time passed they would become hardened so that no thought would ever be given the matter, and no sermon or song could touch their hearts.

These are some of the tragedies of living in a lost condition. One final one is this: If you live lost you will probably die lost. If you know what God expects of you and you decide to wait a few months or years before obeying him, your chances of ever being a Christian are very slim. Some do finally obey the gospel after hearing it all their lives. But these are exceptions to the rule.

If I knew I would die tonight I would certainly want to be in a saved condition. But if I knew I would live a thousand years on this earth, I wouldn't want to live a single minute in a lost condition.

--2805 Madison Street, Adamsville, AL 35005.

Success

Continued From Page 2

the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

The following is a report of some individuals who had attained worldly success.

In 1923, a very important meeting was held in the Edgewater Beach Hotel, in Chicago. Attending this meeting were ten of the world's most successful financiers. Those present were: the president of the largest independent company in the world, the president of the National City Bank, the president of the largest utility company, the greatest wheat speculator, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, a member of the president's cabinet, the greatest bear of Wall Street, head of the world's greatest monopoly, and the president of the Bank of International Settlement.

Solomon summed it up in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Twenty-five years later: Charles Schwab, the president of the largest steel company, died in bankrupt condition. Sam Insull, president of the largest utility company, died as a fugitive from justice. Howard Hobson, president of the largest gas company, was insane. Arthur Cotton, greatest wheat speculator, had died abroad, insolvent. Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Exchange, had just been released from Sing-Sing. Alber Fall, member of the president's cabinet, was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.

Jesse Livermore, the greatest "bear" of Wall Street, had died of suicide. Ivar Gruegar, head of the greatest monopoly, had also committed suicide. Leon Fraser, president of the Bank of International Settlement, had likewise committed suicide.

Someone has defined success: "He has achieved success who has lived well . . . laughed often . . . and loved much. Who has gained the respect of intelligent men, and the love of little children; Who accomplished his task; who left the world better than he found it whether by improved prose or a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty, or failed to express it; who has looked for the best in others . . . and given the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction; and who used life to prepare his soul for heaven." Solomon summed it up in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

--Via East Main Informer, Tupelo MS 38802-1761.

Temptation And Sin

"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 lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15).

The Ark, A Type Of The Church



W. Gaddys Roy

The ark in many ways gives us a graphic picture of the church. In the ark, the family of Noah was together, and separated from the ungodly world. Likewise, believers are redeemed from the sinful world, and are united in the one body, the church, with

Christ as their head (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23).

The ark was of divine construction with Noah, God's faithful servant, the builder (Genesis 6:9). The church is divine, and was built by God's beloved Son (Zechariah 6:12, 13; Matthew 16:13-19).

God gave Noah specific instructions for building the ark. It was to be built of one material, gopher wood (Genesis 6:14). There was to be one source of light, or window. All had to enter the ark by one and the same door (Genesis 6:16). The church is built of one material, and that material is living stones (I Peter 2:5). The one and only light for the church is the Bible (Psalm 119:105; 130; Acts 26:14-18; II Corinthians 4:3, 4). Since Christ is the door to all spiritual blessings (John 10:9). He is the only door to the church.

When Noah had finished the ark, God commanded him and all his house to come into the ark (Genesis 7:1). There was no other family but Noah's family that entered the ark (Genesis 7:7; 13:16). The church that Jesus built is God's family (John 17:20, 21; Ephesians 3:15; I Timothy 3:15). If one has not been "born of water and the Spirit" he cannot be a child of God, and therefore, the Lord will not add him to the church (John 3:5; Acts 2:47).

God commanded Noah to build but one ark. The only way to escape the vengeance of God and be saved from the flood was to enter the ark and pass through the flood to the new world (Genesis 6:14; I Peter 3:20, 21). Likewise, Jesus built only one church (Ephesians 3:10, 11; 4:4-5; Colossians 1:18). The church is not a denomination, but it is the family of God (I Timothy 3:15). The only way that one can be saved by the grace of God is to pass through the water of baptism, and therefore be "born of water and the Spirit" (Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). When one is saved, the Lord will add him to the church (Acts 2:47). The word "church" means the "called out," (out of the world into Christ -- Galatians 3:26-28). Therefore, man is saved in Christ and His church (II Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:3, 7; 5:23).

There was destruction to all outside the ark (Genesis 7:20-23). All will be destroyed who obey not the gospel, and therefore, are not added to the church (Acts 2:47; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Ephesians 5:23).

When Noah entered the ark, his activities did not cease. The animals had to be fed (Genesis 6:21).

When he came out of the ark, he was commanded to be "fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 9:7). We are to work in the church and bear fruit unto God (John 15:1-6; I Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 2:12; II Peter 1:8).

Noah and his family had but one hope to realize and that was life in the new world (Genesis 8:4-19). We have but one hope, and that hope is eternal

life in the next world -- heaven (Matthew 25:46; Ephesians 4:4; Titus 1:2).

Therefore, we should "not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

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Many But Not Much?



Dalton Key

wide but inches deep," the devil is surely rejoicing.

When convicting, Christ-centered sermons are replaced with witty, after-dinner-type nonsense; when questionable lyrics and unauthorized musical forms in worship are overlooked in our preoccupation with the pulsating, toe-tapping, crowd-generating melody; when the eternal and the spiritual are forced to take a back seat to the temporal and the social, apostasy can not be too far distant.

When convicting, Christ-centered sermons are replaced with witty, after-dinner-type nonsense; when questionable lyrics and unauthorized musical forms in worship are overlooked in our preoccupation with the pulsating, toe-tapping, crowd-generating melody; when the eternal and the spiritual are forced to take a back seat to the temporal and the social, apostasy can not be too far distant.

Mark it down and underscore it -- packed buildings, ecstatic crowds, and bulging budgets must never be sought at the expense of divine truth and godly reverence. The price is too high. The

price has always been too high.

When Constantine (272-337 A.D.) married the church to the world, the early church swelled. She saw a sudden and dramatic increase in numbers. The Lord's body became bloated with hordes of unconverted heathen idolators which scurried to join her ranks in return for financial and political favors.

And what was the result? The world did not become Christian, but the church did become worldly. History records the sad story, as complete apostasy transformed the beautiful bride of Christ into the grotesque monster of Rome.

When will we learn the lesson of history? When will we acknowledge the fact that to stand for nothing leaves us susceptible to fall for anything? When will we admit that in striving to please everyone, we generally please no one, except the devil and his crowd?

Many may be seen as good, but much is better. Swelling is one thing, genuine growth another. In the Last Day, we will be judged, not by how many there are of us, but by what there is within us.

--801 N.E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

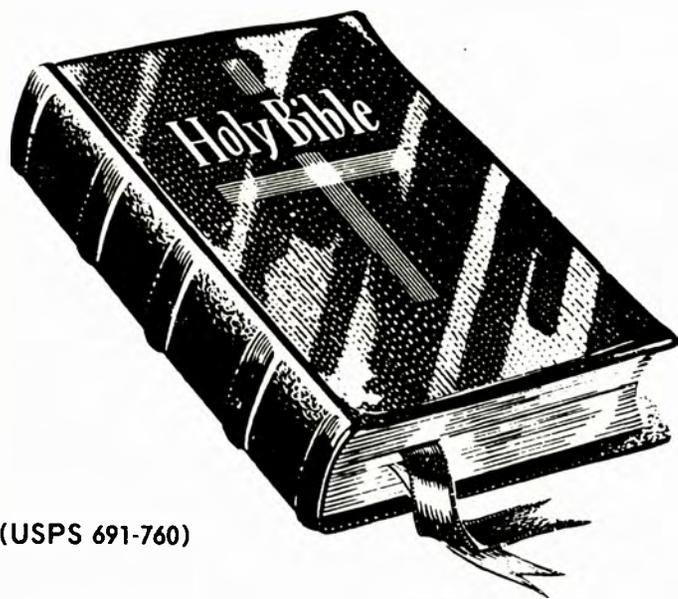
Our Life Together

"... when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless" (I Thessalonians 3:5).

Are you hanging in there? How often do we concern ourselves about those we have helped find the Lord? We hear rumors about their faith beginning to wane. We just can't wait to hear any longer so we go directly to them to find out. Why should we concern ourselves? It's really none of our business. Oh but it is! Salvation is so precious and hell so horrible we can't bear to see these souls perish. Our interest is additionally heightened if this soul is one of our children.

In our church family we have those who have lost interest, lost faith, dropped out, got out of the habit, were offended, etc. For whatever reason a soul is in jeopardy. What do we do? First we must show enough concern to move us to action. But what is the action? You can't force a person to worship God even if they are a Christian. You cannot always heal all the hurts. You can however show love. I care! You matter! You are somebody! Please whatever you do don't quit!

--John McCourt
Via The Keynoter



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

the

:25

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Dad?



Ray Hawk

I was eight years old when Dad left us for another woman. It was 1944. Dad had joined the U.S. Navy. Because of that, the government made sure we received a family check each month. When the war ended, so did the checks. Mother divorced Dad because

of his infidelity. Mom's folks took us in. Four children. I was the oldest. Mom went to work. A year or two after Dad left he sent money to buy us children some shoes for Christmas. To my knowledge, that was the lump sum of Dad's generosity. When he left Mom, he also left us.

In the Old Testament, the prophet stated, "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce" (Malachi 2:16 NKJV). God hates divorce. Whatever God hates, we must. Whatever God hates must be wrong. Divorce is wrong. It is sinful. It destroys marriages. It destroys homes. It hurts people. It left me with a biological dad, but without a real father.

God hates divorce. Whatever God hates, we must. Whatever God hates must be wrong. Divorce is wrong. It is sinful. It destroys marriages. It destroys homes. It hurts people.

When I was nineteen, I found where my Dad lived. I got his permission and visited him. In spite of his failure to be a father to me, my two sisters and my brother, it was good to see him and his wife. The visit was amicable. The memory that stands out most in my mind is that Dad

complained about *his* "hard life." *His* hard life!

About a year later I took my brother to see him. This time we met his wife's three young daughters. The most memorable thing that came out of that visit was Dad's overwhelming desire to show us his "pinup" on the closet door in his bedroom. It was across from the foot of his bed. He said he put it there so it would be "the first thing I see when I wake up." It was a nude pinup. I felt embarrassed for the four women in that house. After that visit I lost contact with him for several years.

In 1972 I found where Dad was living. I started sending him our church bulletin. In 1973 a Church of God preacher challenged churches of Christ for a debate in Gadsden, Alabama, where I was working. I accepted the challenge and signed propositions for a debate in October of that year. After reading about the debate plans, my Dad shot off an angry letter warning me that I would be blaspheming the Holy Ghost if I went through with it. He went on to warn me that if I went ahead with this debate I would "no longer be his son." I proceeded with the discussion and my biological Dad stopped being my Dad. Now I neither had a real Father or a biological Dad.

My dad is now seventy-five years old. I understand he lives somewhere in Arizona. His health isn't what it used to be. All the women in his life are no longer there. Forty-seven years ago my Dad walked out on us. He thought he was gaining so much from another woman's arms. Now she is only a distant, past memory. At least she is a memory. There are some things that will never be a memory to my Dad.

He missed watching me, my two sisters and brother grow up. He missed hearing all those cute things small children say. He missed all those precious things sons and daughters do. He missed seeing us graduate from high school. He missed seeing my brother proudly serve his country during the Vietnam war. He missed my college graduation. He missed our weddings. He has never met my precious, beautiful wife. He never got to meet my father and mother-in-law. Two fine

spiritual giants in a world of pygmies. He never met either one of our boys. He wasn't there when our youngest graduated nor when he married a darling young lady who has brought so much happiness into our lives. He wasn't there when our grandson was born. He has missed so much. We had so much to give him. There are so many memories he will never have because he threw them away on a whim of the past.

My Dad is a stranger to me, my wife, my boys and to our grandson. He has no real family. We are unknown to him. When he dies, he will die without his family close by. He has no family. I know I will have some feelings, because he fathered me. However, my greatest sadness will be over a man who had so much and gave it all away for so little.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7 NKJV).

Divorce. God hates it. I do, too. It destroys marriages. It destroys families. It keeps people from having pleasant memories as they grow older.

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them' (Ecclesiastes 12:1 NIV).

--1490 Campbell Street, Jackson, TN 38305.

BIBLE VERSE



Matthew 6:30

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

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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Have You Been Baptized?



John Gipson

She was twenty years old and had been attending worship services for years. But the question, "Have you been baptized?" brought her up short. She said she did not remember. It seemed to her that she "joined the church" during a revival but she could not be sure of this. Everything was too fuzzy. She might have been baptized; or again, she might not have been. She just couldn't recall.

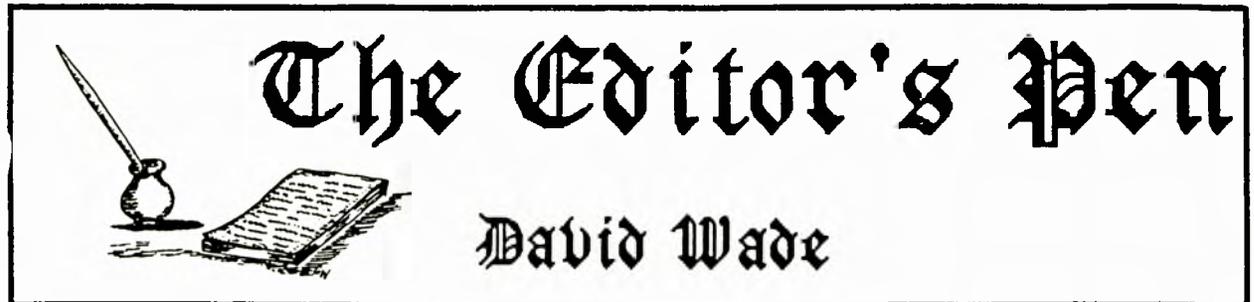
It is beyond our imagination that a first-century Christian would not remember whether or not he was baptized.

It is beyond our imagination that a first-century Christian would not remember whether or not he was baptized.

The Bible teaches that baptism into Christ is important. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3, 4).

Baptism stands at the beginning of one's commitment to Christ, but it is not the "end of" and "be all" of religion. (Preacher, don't you worry about me. I quit going to church. Just got out of the habit. But I was baptized over twenty years ago, so

Continued On Page 3



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" (Proverbs 22:8); ". . . Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7); "He made a

"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

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."

This Thing Called Discipleship



Winfred Clark

Those who read their Bibles are well aware of the term "disciples." Jesus used that word often in talking to his followers. In fact you will find an interesting discussion of this while Jesus was in the region of Peraea. It was there that multitudes followed him (Luke 14:25). He had not

spent as much time in this area as in some others and the people were seizing the opportunity to hear what he had to say. But they would learn that the Lord's teaching would be the same in that area as in other areas. Jesus would show them that it was not that easy to be a disciple. There were some prices that would have to be paid and unless they were willing to pay these prices they could not be his disciple. As one has said, "come at all cost, but stop and count the cost." This is the thing that Jesus would impress upon the hearts and minds of those who might rush headlong into following him. He wanted them to know discipleship is a very costly thing. In fact, if they knew where Jesus was going at the time, they would know what the cost of following him would be. You see, he was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. He was going there to die for the sins of all of us. That is what the cost would be to him.

Jesus would show them that it was not that easy to be a disciple. There were some prices that would have to be paid and unless they were willing to pay these prices they could not be his disciple.

We would do well to stop and look at what the Lord would have to say about "this thing called discipleship."

BECOMING A DISCIPLE HAS A PRICE

Listen to what the Son of God has to say about the matter. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). This is very bold and decisive language. It clearly sounds the note that one may have to sacrifice some relationships. These described have to do with the family, those who are the closest to us. However, there may come the time when one would have to make a choice. He or she might have to come to the parting of the ways with members of his or her family. All of us know that this is not the easy thing to do. But when one becomes a disciple his

Continued On Page 3

The Purpose Of Baptism, And The "Rebaptism" Question



Cecil May, Jr.

Why be baptized?
The Bible says:

To be saved. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

For remission of sins and to receive the Holy Spirit. "Be baptized . . . for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

(Acts 2:38).

To wash away sins. "Be baptized and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16).

To get into Christ, into his death and to begin new life. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

To get into Christ's body. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13).

To be in Christ, to put on Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

For salvation. Baptism . . . now saves you" (I Peter 3:21).

In the current "rebaptism" discussion, the question is raised, "Which (or how many) of these purposes must one understand to be scripturally baptized?" It is the wrong question. These are not different purposes for baptism; they are different ways of stating one primary truth about baptism. Baptism is the point at which the change occurs from being still in sin to being free from sin (cf. Romans 6:17-18).

Have You Been Baptized?

Continued From Page 2

I don't have anything to worry about. I'm saved").

The new birth is just that -- a new birth! It is not the end. It is the beginning that "we too might walk in newness of life."

When a little human form is brought into the world, we say that a child is born. Life isn't completed. It has only begun.

So with baptism and the new birth. Baptism simply sets the stage for successive experiences with the living Lord. After birth comes growth! That's true in the physical realm and in the spiritual.

I'm thinking now of the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

*"To be conformed with the Risen One--
that is to be a new man before God."*

--Little Rock, Ark.

The question is not whether one must understand "for the remission of sins" rather than "to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is whether one must understand "for the remission of sins" rather than "because my sins are already remitted;" "into Christ" rather than "because I am in Christ;" "to receive the Spirit," rather than "because I have the Spirit." For one to be baptized believing salvation has already occurred nullifies every biblical purpose for baptism.

For one to be baptized believing salvation has already occurred nullifies every biblical purpose for baptism.

We should not be skeptical if some we did not teach, as a result of their own study, seem to have understood and been baptized correctly. We say the Bible alone makes Christians only, and the Bible can be understood. But if we know something that raises questions about people's baptism, we need to

inquire, "Into what then were you baptized?" If their answer reveals they were taught wrong, they should "be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-7).

"But," it is objected, "is it not the highest motive of all just to be baptized to obey the Lord?" Obedience is certainly one reason for being baptized, but it is also one reason for taking the Lord's supper. Both baptism and the Lord's supper are commandments of the Lord, but the Lord's supper is not essential to salvation in the way baptism is. We discuss the fate of those who plan to be baptized but die without obeying. We have no such question about those who are baptized on Monday night and die before Sunday, never having eaten the Lord's supper.

Any who would believe they must eat the Lord's supper to be in Christ grossly misunderstand both salvation and the Lord's supper. Any who fail to recognize that baptism is into Christ grossly misunderstand both salvation and baptism.

--Magnolia Bible College, P.O. Box 1101,
Kosciusko, MS 39090.

This Thing Called Discipleship

Continued From Page 2

relationship to the Lord must come first.

Becoming a disciple may mean one must suffer reproach. Note what Jesus had to say about it, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). All of us know that a cross was a thing of reproach but carry that cross, the disciple of the Lord must! Isn't this what Peter had in mind when he said, "IF ye be reproached for the name of Christ" (I Peter 4:14)? He would also counsel us to not be ashamed because of such (I Peter 4:16). This is the price one pays for becoming a disciple.

CONTINUING AS A DISCIPLE HAS A PRICE

Jesus used the illustration of one intending to build a tower (Luke 14:28-30). He should first sit down and count the cost. He needs to know that he has what it will take to build the complete tower. The emphasis is on finishing the task that lies before you. After all, building is more than just the foundation. There is more to it. Jesus wanted those who became disciples to know that he expected them to continue as disciples. This will demand that a man throw all that he has into the endeavor so that he might indeed finish the task before him.

We all know that this was a major objective of our Lord. Remember when he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:34). He would later say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). On the cross he said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). But just think of the price he had to pay to finish the task that was before him. There was more to it than just the beginning. There had to be the finish, and there was.

BEING A DISCIPLE HAS A PRICE

Three times within this section of Luke's record

we will find Jesus using certain conditions and saying unless these are met one "cannot be my disciple." Why would he repeat this over and over again? One could think of several reasons but one surely must be and Jesus does not want people to think that there is no difficulty, danger or demands. You will find that he would spell out the demands in plain and simple terms. He wants people to know that being a disciple will take deliberation. You have to think about the matter before you become involved. It will also take determination. There must be the determination to pay whatever price one is called upon to pay in order to be disciple. He must be able to make a decision that Jesus and his cause will come first and then when some counter claim presents itself, that decision is already made. He does not have to go back and resurvey his position. He already knows what he will do. The true disciple will have already decided to give up all that he has in order to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be a person who is sold out to the Lord (Luke 14:25-33).

That is the kind of person that will be an influence as salt. This kind of person will make a difference in a sinful world. He will retain his saltiness, or the thing that makes him salt (Luke 14:34-35). In these kinds of people you will have that which will preserve that which is good in this world. They are the ones who make the real difference.

We can be thankful that men and women are still willing to pay the price to become, continue and be a disciple. May their tribe increase in a world that desperately needs the good influence of such folks.
--P.O. Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.

What Does It Mean To Be In Christ?



W. A. Holley

"Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me" (Romans 16:7). To be in Christ and to be in the world refers to two relationships which are diametrically op-

posed to each other (Ephesians 1:6-7; I John 5:19). If one is "in Christ," he is under the power and dominion of Christ, and is entitled to all those blessings that are said to be in Him; but, if one is "in the world," he is under the power and dominion of Satan, and is subject to being cast into hell (John 8:44; I John 3:10; Mark 4:14-15; I Peter 5:8; Job 1:7).

Hence, we can safely conclude that all responsible persons are either "in Christ," or "out of Christ," for there is no middle ground (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16-18, cf. 6:3-4). That you may be able to consider candidly your relationship to Christ or your relationship to the world, we submit the following remarks for your careful meditation.

(1) If you do not wish to be alienated from God and His promises, you must be "in Christ." The apostle Paul wrote, "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:12-13).

(2) We must be "in Christ," if we would be a part of God's heritage. Paul writes of God's determination to "sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we are made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:10-11). What significance is attached to the term "heritage?" We have but to turn to the writings of Moses for a divine explanation: "Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9; I Peter 1:4; 5:3). Hence, those "out of Christ" are not a portion of God's heritage.

(3) One must be "in Christ" in order to establish and maintain contact with the cleansing blood of Christ: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Thus, the sinner is lost "out of Christ," for one cannot contact the cleansing blood of Christ unless one enters into Christ.

(4) We must be in Christ, if we are to enjoy the blessings of redemption. Hear the apostle Paul: "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). It is evident, therefore, that if one is out of Christ, one is outside that relationship in which redemption and forgiveness of sins is found.

(5) Verily, unless we are "in Christ," we cannot be in the "one body," or church, of which Jesus Christ

is the builder and Saviour (Matthew 16:13-19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). It is crystal clear that no one can be in Christ and out of His body at the same time (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42; cf. Romans 12:5; I Thessalonians 2:13-14).

(6) If one is not "in Christ," one is not a "new creature." The apostle Paul taught: "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things have passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Thus, those who are not "born again" cannot be "new creatures," OUT OF CHRIST, and, therefore, they have no promise of life eternal (John 3:3, 5; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

(7) "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him are ye made full . . ." (Colossians 2:9-10; 1:19). Hence, one must be "in Christ," if one wishes to be filled with the power, wisdom, and goodness of God.

(8) "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake," said Paul, "that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10). If one would be saved, one must be in Christ! One cannot be saved out of Christ!

(9) "There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus . . ." (Romans 8:1). It should be observed that this promise is limited to those "in Christ," "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit . . ." "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the

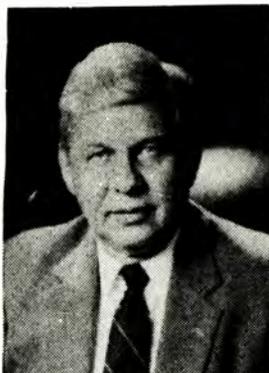
deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:1-4, 13).

(10) "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them" (Revelation 14:13). But one cannot die in the Lord unless one is in the Lord when one dies. One cannot die in Alabama unless one is in Alabama when one dies. How does one enter into the Lord Jesus Christ? We shall permit the Holy Bible to speak for itself. One enters Christ when by faith, repentance, confession of Jesus' name, one is baptized into Jesus Christ. Where did such an idea come from? "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).

"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). No, one is not saved by faith only, but one saved by faith when that faith expresses itself in acts of obedience which includes repentance, confession, and baptism (Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16).

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Comprehensive Preaching



Cecil May, Jr.

Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that his preaching at Ephesus had been comprehensive (Acts 20:18-35).

Comprehensive in time. Paul preached at all seasons, from the first day he sat foot in Asia for the whole three years he was among them (vv. 18, 31). He "did not cease night or day to warn every one with tears" (v. 31), even while supporting himself with

his own hands (v. 34).

Preachers expect members who work 40 hours a week to also attend services, participate in meetings and group activities, and visit and teach others. It ill behooves preachers to complain if we do not get two days off a week, or if our work-day is longer than 9:00 to 5:00. We must "be urgent, in season and out of season" (II Timothy 4:2).

Comprehensive in method. Paul taught "in public and from house to house" (v. 20).

Some preachers became glad handing social worker-psychologist-administrators, and a needed call rang out to preachers, "Study and preach the word." Some mistook this, unfortunately, as a call to shut themselves up in their study and not to visit, as "pastoral work" interferes with preaching. Many need the gospel who will not attend services: erring or troubled members, "publicans and sinners," "every creature," "all nations." Those who will not hear publicly should be sought "from house to house."

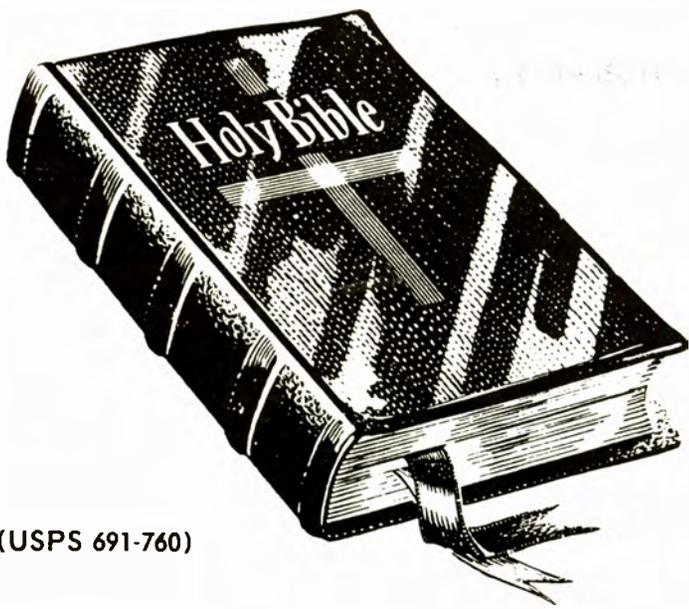
Comprehensive in message. Paul "did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God" (v. 27).

He preached the word of God's grace and built them up, assuring them of an inheritance among the sanctified (v. 35). He also preached negative things, "warning" that fierce wolves would come, not sparing the flock, and that some among them would speak "perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (vv. 29-30).

Touching every member's felt need and pushing the baby boomers' every "hot button" is still not preaching the whole counsel of God. Teaching the truth on every "issue," and exposing every known false brother is still not preaching the whole counsel of God.

Touching every member's felt need and pushing the baby boomers' every "hot button" is still not preaching the whole counsel of God. Teaching the truth on every "issue," and exposing every known false brother is still not preaching the whole counsel of God. The "whole counsel" begins with God, proclaims His gift in Christ, shows how to obey the gospel, and points the way to life in Him, showing both the way to go and the ways not to go.

Another word for *comprehensive* is *balanced*.
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(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Fest
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the
Acts 26:25

VOLUME 28

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NUMBER 11

Modesty



Joe T. Splvy, Sr. In I Timothy 2:8-10 Paul writes, "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing. In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works."

When we teach about a controversial issue there are always those negative voices that seek to shower the teaching with ridicule and scorn. I'm not sure, but that could have been the exact intent of the lawyer of Luke 10:29 who asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Because of such attitudes that exist among us, the teaching of modesty either falls on deaf ears or is constantly under attack. When modesty is mentioned someone always asks, "And, just what is modesty?" Godly women with great degrees of Bible knowledge do not ask such shallow questions. The reason being very simple, modesty is the very atmosphere in which she walks, and talks, and works, and plays and performs all of her various functions. It involves her deep commitment to Christ and shows her understanding of that principle which says "the head of the woman is the man" (I Corinthians 11:3). The godly woman is very much aware and always mindful that "the husband is the head of the wife" (Ephesians 5:23).

The role of the godly Christian woman is to be a loving and cheerful help meet for her husband (if she be married), to bear children, to guide the household, to help train the children, and to in turn help in the development of the younger women (Genesis 2:18-34; I Timothy 2:15; 4:14; Titus 2:2-4). In so doing her appearance and her dress will

reflect her deep-seated godliness and shamefacedness.

Those who live for the desires and appetites of the flesh will dress and adorn themselves in such a way as to appeal to the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. The God-fearing woman will not yield her body to the creation of undue temptation on the part of her associates as will the carnally minded woman.

Those who live for the desires and appetites of the flesh will dress and adorn themselves in such a way as to appeal to the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. The God-fearing woman will not yield her body to the creation of undue temptation on the part of her associates as will the carnally minded woman. The God-fearing woman knows the tremendous pull of the carnal man and she will, to the extent of her ability, become the guardian of virtue -- she will not say "I can't help what some dirty-minded ole man thinks." The God-fearing woman knows that she is to be a "light set on a hill" by which men are to glorify God, not satan, and that her body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. She is much more concerned about the spiritual growth of the souls of her associates, and ultimately, their salvation . . . much more concerned with that than with seeking her "own rights" to "wear whatever I please."

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Should The Church Adapt To Culture?



Tim Rice

Recently it has been argued that Jesus adapted to the culture of his day, and therefore we should. In arguing this, brethren are now saying, in effect, that Jesus did not have a plan, a message, an agenda, when he came to earth. This is accusing Jesus of situation ethics. Worse, it is accusing him of allowing men to sway him, and therefore takes a swipe at the deity of Christ. We should realize that Jesus came to earth to bring the truth (John 1:17; 8:32; 14:6). That truth might fall to the right or left of people's preconceived ideas, but Jesus taught the truth. Therefore we should obey the truth Jesus brought.

At the conclusion of the greatest sermon ever recorded, the sermon on the mount, we read: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matthew 7:28, 29). McGarvey comments on these verses:

We should realize that Jesus came to earth to bring the truth (John 1:17; 8:32; 14:6). That truth might fall to the right or left of people's preconceived ideas, but Jesus taught the truth.

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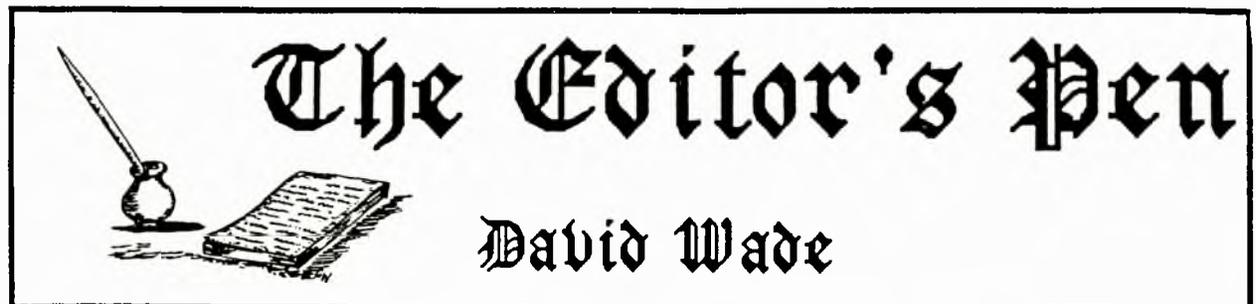
*"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the Words of Truth and soberness."
--Acts 26:25*

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Modest Apparel



David Wade

As the weather warms, many will indulge in the annual ritual of parading in public places in scanty apparel that leaves little or nothing to the imagination. Most Christians would agree that they should "adorn themselves in modest apparel" (I

with the fig leaves Adam and Eve sewed together for coverings, therefore, he made for them, "coats of skins and did clothe them" (Genesis 3:21). This took place before the birth of Cain (Genesis 4:1).

The first case of drunkenness and the second offense of nakedness is recorded in Genesis 9:20-25. Shem and Japheth were careful to turn away their faces so as not to see their drunken and naked father as they entered to cover him. It is easy to get sidetracked on the curse of Canaan and miss the matter of modesty.

One of the darkest days in Old Testament history is recorded in II Samuel 11:1-5. King David's sin with Bathsheba cost the life of Uriah, and ultimately the death of four of David's sons (cf. II Samuel 12:6). Obviously, it was wrong for Bathsheba to expose herself to David, and it was wrong for David to look on her with lust. This fact is established in the ensuing tragedy.

Perhaps the examples could be multiplied, but surely we get the point. We need to understand that there is a direct relationship between the spirit as God would want it adorned and the clothing that covers our body. It is only through the physical body that our spirit expresses itself. Being chaste involves more than not being a fornicator, it involves dressing in such a way that we do not evoke lustful thought in others (Matthew 5:27-30). Some may lust no matter what you wear, but this argument will not vindicate you when you forsake modesty.

Those who are "not bothered" by anything anyone else may wear have lost their sense of shame. Those who argue that "anything goes" should not be surprised or complain at the grave consequences of immodesty which is both a cause and effect of immorality.

Should The Church Adapt To Culture?

Continued From Page 1

"The most notable effect of the preceding sermon on the people who heard it, was the astonishment produced by a single feature of it, the authority with which Jesus taught. The authority assumed was absolute -- the authority which belongs to God alone. It was not that of the scribes, who spake by the authority of Moses; nor that of Moses himself, whose expression was, "Thus saith the Lord;" but it was authority inherent in himself, enabling him to say even when adding to the law of God itself, "I say unto you."

Those who have made the statement that Jesus adapted to the culture of his day imply, and in cases state, that we do not have to follow the Bible closely. Rather, they say we should do that which is acceptable to our culture. This position, quite frankly, leaves us with no authority at all.

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Timothy 2:9).

The big question is, "What constitutes modest apparel?" Some would argue from the context of I Timothy 2:9 that "modest" has reference "not expensive or gaudy," as opposed to "gold, pearls, or costly clothing." While the passage refers to excess, it is not limited to excess only. The command is that "women adorn themselves." The qualifiers are "with shamefacedness and sobriety" or, as another version renders, "with decency and propriety." Costly array may also be the scantiest of clothing. Therefore, Paul is not merely discussing the "cost of clothing."

One may ask, "Why does the New Testament say so very little about appropriate dress for the Christian?" You might as well ask, "Why does the New Testament say so little about creation, origin of the species, the spread of mankind, the flood, etc." The answer is apparent. God's mind has already been revealed in great detail on these matters (Romans 15:4). This same record, the Old Testament, gives examples by which we may know the mind of God on the subject of modesty.

After the sin of Adam and Eve, nakedness took on a different meaning and clothing became a necessity (Genesis 3:7-11). God was not pleased

Making Adultery "Legal"

B. J. Clarke

While watching late night television a few months ago, I heard that the Governor of Connecticut had just signed legislation repealing a law on the books which said that adultery was against the law in the state of Connecticut. I was flabbergasted! Just who does the Governor of Connecticut think he is to attempt to "legalize" what the Supreme Governor of the Universe long ago declared to be illegal?

Both inspired testaments testify to the illegality of adultery in the eyes of Almighty God. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:18). The penalty for committing adultery was

severe. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10). The penalty for committing adultery is still severe, for no adulterer shall inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Paul classified adultery as a work of the flesh and then noted that those who practice such works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19, 21).

The tragic response by many to the previous paragraph is simply to deny that the Bible has any authority to govern our lives. Some say, "So what

if the Bible condemns adultery! The Bible is an outdated volume of ancient literature which is simply out of touch with our modern world. Things are different now than they were when the Bible was written. After all, God is love and he wants people to be happy." Such statements reflect an ignorance of the abiding relevance and authority of the Scriptures (Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:25).

Even more tragic is the fact that some of our own brethren have found their own ways to try to "legalize" what God has made illegal. They will not go so far as to say that the Bible has no

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Another Black Eye For Ministers



Jerry Jenkins

In the name of the Lord Jesus, ministers through the centuries have condoned the disunity in Christianity. It was a minister that this writer first heard thanking God in prayer for the diversity among followers of Jesus. The Christ who died to make

all one and break down the "wall of petition" in order to accomplish this (Ephesian 2:16) must grieve that ministers have joined forces with those who make mockery of one of the fundamental purposes of His death.

It is not because this article is being written from an office in Birmingham, Alabama, that this writer decries ministers and church leaders using pulpits as political devices to incite actions of lawless rebellion, but it is that God intended the pulpit to be used to draw men to Him.

To watch "ministers" on the city council again and again approve sin such as endorsing betting on horses to granting yet another liquor license, or mapping out another section for the porno trade, is disgraceful.

Preach the gospel, not the latest issue carefully clothed in religious liturgy and holy grandiosity. A world is dying without a knowledge of God and ministers have sold out to Mammon.

To such actions could be added the televangelists, who in the name of the Lord cheat, swindle, and rob innocent viewers of hard earned income to supposedly preach the gospel, but in reality

enhance the coffers of the receivers.

Finally, just as the public was about to forget the sexual theatrics of Jim Baker and Jimmy Swaggert, along comes The National Committee for Mercy, a group of ministers circulating a petition asking an Indiana judge to suspend Tyson's rape conviction.

Would you agree with this writer, "It is time for preachers to remember the charge of Jesus, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mark 16:15)." Preach the gospel, not the latest issue carefully clothed in religious liturgy and holy grandiosity. A world is dying without a knowledge of God and ministers have sold out to Mammon. As Ezekiel stated centuries ago, "... Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?" (Ezekiel 34:2)

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Melchizedek, A Type Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

One could hardly conceive of a type more clearly set forth than Melchizedek as a type of Christ. The psalmist when prophesying of the Messiah said, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). The writer of Hebrews refers

to the Genesis record and applies it to Jesus (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:1-12). There are many points of comparison between Melchizedek and Christ.

They were both priests of God (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 6:20 - 7:12). Melchizedek was from Canaan doing the will of God, and officiating in his priestly office (Genesis 14:18-20). Christ came down from heaven to do the will of the father, and He is now officiating in His priestly office (John 1:1-3; 6:38; 17:5; Hebrews 6:20).

Each had a mysterious appearance. There is no record of Melchizedek's ancestors nor of anyone's being priest before or after him (Hebrews 7:3). Jesus was born of a virgin, which was mysterious and miraculous (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25). No one was a priest of His tribe before Jesus, nor were there any after Him (Hebrews 7:13-15).

Melchizedek was superior to Abraham (Hebrews 7:7). So was Christ who said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Christ has all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23).

Melchizedek was king of righteousness and also king of peace (Hebrews 7:2). Jesus lived a sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 2:22). His kingdom is "a sceptre of righteousness" and He is "prince of peace" (Hebrews 1:8; Isaiah 9:6; Romans 14:17).

The sons of Aaron were made priest without an

Making Adultery "Legal"

Continued From Page 2

authority to govern their lives. Rather, they will pick and choose the parts of Scripture that are authoritative to them or else they will engage in "hermeneutical gymnastics" to explain away the plain teaching of the sacred writings. No passage has been more mutilated in recent years than Matthew 19:9. A verse that was so easy to understand in the past has suddenly become complex. The complexity of Matthew 19:9 is exactly proportionate to the cultural attitude of our time toward what God has said about adultery. The more more disrespect some show for the teaching, the more diluted some preachers will present it. After all, we have to bring souls to Jesus, don't we? Why let what Jesus taught about adultery get in the way? Is not this the attitude that some are cheering on today? Why can't we see that we have not truly converted someone to Jesus unless we have taught them to be willing to honor and respect all that he taught about every subject including marriage, divorce and remarriage? The Governor of Connecticut is not the only one seeking to repeal the illegality of adultery. Is it not sad but true that many "churches of Christ" have become refugee camps for adulterers and adulteresses who have fled there because they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts have heaped to themselves teachers and having itching ears have turned away their ears from the truth so that they might listen to fables (II Timothy 4:3, 4)? Some churches who do not actively teach error on Matthew 19:9 and other such passages, still sin against a holy God by accepting with open arms those who are involved in adulterous relationships. We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Rather, we are to expose them or lay them bare (Ephesians 5:11). Rather than be involved in

rebuking adulterers, some churches appoint them to wait on the Lord's table and to serve in the public worship service. If a church is going to allow impenitent adulterers and adulteresses into its midst, it might as well put up a sign outside the church building announcing that they have decreed adultery to be "legal" regardless of what God has said.

Some say, "So what if the Bible condemns adultery! The Bible is an outdated volume of ancient literature which is simply out of touch with our modern world. . . ."

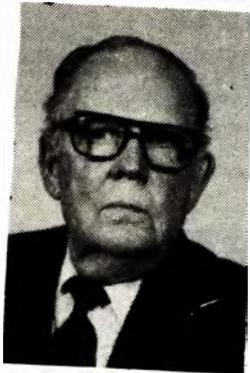
Jeremiah declared in his time that the land was full of adulterers (Jeremiah 23:10). The church is too! For "whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The Bible is plain. Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4). He will also judge those who approve of their illegal actions by bidding them God speed and partaking of their evil deeds (II John 10, 11).

--Via Power, P.O. Box 128, Southaven, MS 38671.

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Words Of Truth
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Why The Bible Is So Often Misunderstood



W. A. Holley

It is not because it cannot be understood -- clearly, according to divine teaching, it (the Bible) can be understood. We shall read Ephesians 3:3-4. "How that by revelation (God's revealed word) 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). What does these two verses teach?

God's revelation, is written and when one reads, it can be understood. If this is not the case, why did Jesus command his apostles to preach (teach) the gospel of Christ to every creature? (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). If the Bible cannot be understood, it is useless. If mathematics, or science, or history cannot be understood, why waste time teaching them? Moses understood that children could understand the law of God (Deuteronomy 6:4-10).

Why is the Bible so often misunderstood? We shall offer a few reasons--

(1) Countless thousands have not learned to properly divide it. We must not scramble it like scrambling eggs or make vegetable soup of it. Any text taken out of context becomes a pretext!! Paul urged Timothy, a young preacher, to "Study to

show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). The American Version renders this verse ". . . handling aright the word of truth." Hence, the Bible must rightly divided or handled aright. It is possible for one to wrest (twist) the scriptures in such a manner as to destroy their meaning (II Peter 3:16).

When one rightly divide the Bible one will learn that there are two grand divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, covers three great dispensations of time -- the Patriarchal (2500 years), the Mosaic (1500 years), and the Christian, lasting until the coming of Christ. The reader needs to know the different classifications of Biblical literature: history, poetry, prophecy, gospels, epistles, and the apocalyptic (Revelation). One needs to know the general chronology of the Old and New Testaments. There are time elements involved. What happened first, second, third, and so on. Who lived first, Noah or Adam? In what dispensation did the great flood occur? The basic order of events is very important. One needs to learn the names and deeds of the major Old Testament characters. Also, one needs to know the names and deeds of the New Testament characters: John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles, Paul, Barnabas, Peter, Timothy, et al. Remember:

When you learn more, you will know more.

(2) Some do not understand the Bible because they have come to the conclusion that it cannot be understood. Priests and preachers, by the score, have convinced countless thousands that the Bible cannot be understood. For selfish reasons, they say come to us and we will tell you what it means. This is one of the ways Satan blinds the minds of the unsuspecting (II Corinthians 4:1-7).

Some people are more interested in their own notions, opinions, and preconceived ideas, than they are in genuine Bible truth. Jesus, your Saviour and mine, said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15; Mark 4:12). Verily, those who "stop their ears, close their eyes, and harden their heart," can not understand -- the word of God. Consider the Bible as a special letter from a special friend and you will have little difficulty in understanding it.

(3) When considering any Bible passage ask some special questions:

--Who is speaking?

--Who is being addressed?

--What is the subject?

--Under what age or dispensation was it said?

--Rudyard Kipling, said:

"I keep six honest, serving men

(They taught me all I knew:),

Their names are What and Why and When

And How and Where and Who."

(4) Never start with preconceived notions or ideas. Never seek to find Bible support for what you already believe (Acts 17:11). Be honest enough to let the Bible speak for itself (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38).

Does the Bible teach Faith only? Grace only? Total Depravity? Mourners' Bench Religion? the direct operation of the Holy Ghost in conversion? Take Jesus as your personal Saviour? A limited atonement? If the answer is Yes, where are the passages that so teach??

Does your Bible say anything concerning, "One church is just as good as another?" Where do you read, "Join the church of your choice." What scripture teaches that "baptism is a non-essential command, it is only an outward sign of an inward grace." Should you know the scripture, please let us know. First Peter 4:11 should be read and digested!!

(5) A lack of honest, sincere study of the Bible is perhaps the greatest cause of misunderstanding what it really teaches. Israel was destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Ezra prepared his heart to seek . . . do . . . and to teach the law of God (Ezra 7:10; cf. I Peter 3:15). What the human family needs is more Scripture and less human philosophy (I Timothy 6:20).

Dear Reader, do not despair: You can understand God's word. Read it, believe it, obey it, and live according to its principles, and heaven will be your eternal home.

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

Melchizedek, A Type Of Christ

Continued From Page 3

oath, as was no doubt the case with Melchizedek, but Jesus was made priest with an oath (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:21). This further shows the superiority of the priesthood of Christ.

There is no record of the ancestry of Melchizedek nor the beginning or the ending of his priesthood. So far as the record is concerned, he abideth a priest continually (Hebrews 7:3). Jesus stands alone as a high priest with no predecessor or successor. He remains a priest forevermore (Hebrews 7:17, 28; Psalm 110:4).

Melchizedek was priest and king at the same time (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1, 2). Christ is king and priest at the same time (Zechariah 6:12, 13). He could not be a priest on earth (Hebrews 7:12; 8:4). Therefore, Christ is our king and high priest now, and He is reigning from heaven (Daniel 7:13, 14). Those who subscribe to the doctrine of Premillennialism dethrone Christ, and destroy His priestly reign, for He is to be priest and king at the same time, and He cannot be a priest on earth, as we saw from Hebrews 8:4. Furthermore, those who expect Jesus to come and set up an earthly kingdom have lost their right to prayer. If Jesus is not king now, He is not priest now; therefore, they have no means through which to approach God in prayer.

Melchizedek was above Abraham and the Levitical priesthood, as is necessarily implied by

his receiving tithes from Abraham and blessing him (Hebrews 7:1-12). Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek and is therefore above the Levitical priesthood. He receives our gifts and blesses us (Luke 19:10; Hebrews 5:9; 7:25, 26). Therefore, we ought to cheerfully and willingly give to Jesus, as Abraham gave to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:4-6; Romans 12:8; II Corinthians 9:6-10).

Melchizedek was priest before the law (Hebrews 7:3). Christ is priest after the law (Colossians 2:14-16). The writer of the Hebrew letter, when contrasting the priesthood of Melchizedek with the priesthood of Christ, very graphically shows the superiority of the priesthood of Christ.

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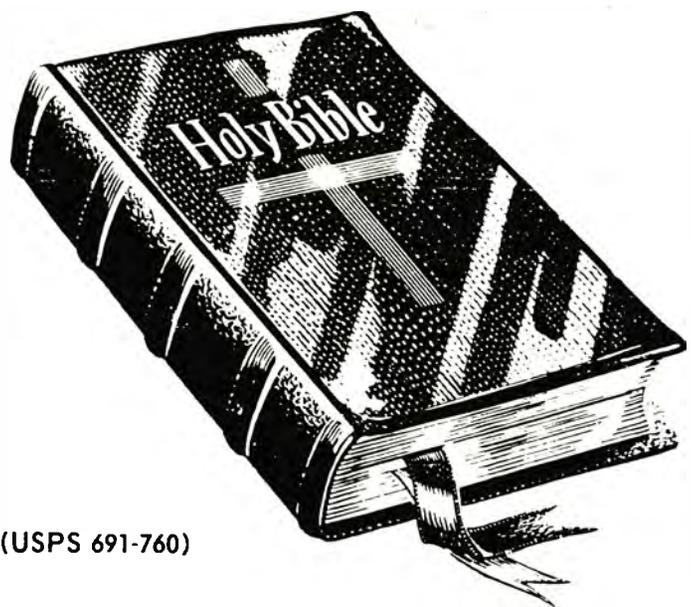
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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus
Words of Truth and soberness."

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s 26:25

VOLUME 28

MARCH 20, 1992

NUMBER 12

Saving Faith Is Like The Nightingale, A Song Bird At Night



Cecil Corkren

The European nightingale is characterized by its melodious singing and by the singing of its sweetest songs especially at night. An Indian from Calcutta, India, Rabindranath Tagore, said, "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark." This philosophy is comparable

to Abraham's faith for that which was promised him was to excite his hope. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations" (Romans 4:18). Tagore, though he was born in Calcutta, India, amidst poverty and despair, could still have faith like the song bird at night, and rise above his surroundings and become a great poet, philosopher and supporter of freedom for India. This in of itself was an achievement of great faith. Jesus saw this kind of faith in praising the Centurion for his great faith when he said to Jesus, "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). Jesus, "said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:10).

Christians with faith in God's care and protection can face any problem by "Casting all your cares (anxiety) upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Knowing this should stir in our hearts the greatest of faith, and cause us to sing the song of faith by night. Abraham did not procrastinate when he was told by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac. He truly demonstrated his faith by rising up early in the morning (Genesis 22:3). He was like the "bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."

Tagore dreamed: "I slept and dreamt/ that life

was joy/ I woke and saw/ that life was duty/ I acted, and behold! Duty was joy!" When the Christian moves, with faith by night, toward God he or she will find the greatest joy through duty and gratitude in serving others. When we serve others we are through faith serving our Lord. Brothers and sisters we all should find reasons to sing in the darkness during troubled times. The church is going through some difficult times, and the prospects for numerical growth as well as spiritual growth seems at a stand still; therefore, we should sing our best songs like the nightingale. When things look the darkest could be just before the dawn.

"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."

Paul and Silas sang and prayed in the Philippian jail at the hour of midnight, when things looked the darkest for these two preachers. They perhaps prayed the most beautiful prayers and sang like the nightingale the most melodious, because their audience was their fellowprisoners. When our way seems the darkest we should like Abraham trust God by faith, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, and giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20). Saving faith is when we can sing at the hour of midnight, when there seems to be little hope for the future.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

I Am Pro Choice!

John W. Hall

Our nation has been debating the abortion question for some time now. Recently the State of Utah passed a bill that experts say will probably wind up in the Supreme Court, which could have some effects on previous rulings. When we look at those who debate the question, they are usually divided into two groups: Pro-Choice and Pro-Life. In this matter I am Pro-Life.

Pro choice means that the mother has the right to decide about the matter and no one else. In the matter of abortion, these people forget about the rights of the unborn. While they claim to be Pro choice, they are not . . . for they do exactly the opposite of what they claim . . . in that they decide

for the infant. They forget that they are here because no one decided against their future. They are here because their parents believed in the sanctity of life, their life even before they were born.

However, being pro choice does not have to be a bad thing. I would like to think I am pro choice in a number of things. Every legitimate child of God is one because he freely chose to become one. No one forced it on him. Here are some areas in which I am pro choice. What about you?

I am pro choice about the Bible. I choose to

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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I Am Pro Choice!

Continued From Page 1

believe it is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative word of God. I believe its precepts are eternal in nature.

I am pro choice about Jesus Christ. I have studied the evidence, and believe that He is the Son of God . . . that He was born of a virgin . . . that He died for me on the cross . . . that He was resurrected from the dead . . . and that now He reigns in His kingdom . . . and that He is coming again.

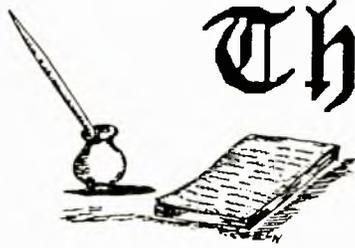
While they claim to be Pro choice, they are not . . . for they do exactly the opposite of what they claim . . . in that they decide for the infant. They forget that they are here because no one decided against their future. They are here because their parents believed in the sanctity of life, their life even before they were born.

I am pro choice about the church. I believe it is the universal body of baptized believers in Christ. I believe He is coming back for it when He comes again to take them home to heaven to live with Him eternally.

There are a lot of things I could talk about. I am just pointing out that in making the right choice. . . a free choice. . . that you are choosing life. It is my individual right, no one can take it from me, or do it for me.

What about you? What choice have you made? Have they been the right choices? If so, you can be sure that you are pro life . . . eternal life!

--Via Attalla Advocate



The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Perilous Times



David Wade

January 22, 1992 marked the nineteenth anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. What some would call the "enlightened age" is more correctly called by scripture, "perilous times" (II Timothy 3:1-7).

We are living in perilous times when the abortion mills have legally killed over 29 million babes since January 22, 1973. A few comparisons may help you to realize the enormity of this problem. In nineteen years the abortion slaughter has exceeded twenty times the war dead in the two hundred fourteen year history of our nation. In this short time death by abortion has eliminated a 12.8% equivalent of our present population. In America an average of 4,190 babies are dying by abortion each day. Yes, we are living in perilous times. The unborn are dying in perilous times. When two people enter the abortion clinic only one person leaves alive.

We are living in perilous times when a teenage unmarried expectant mother can have an abortion without ever informing her parents or having their consent. And yet the same girl must have parental consent to have her ears pierced. She cannot have a tooth pulled or donate blood under age 17 without parental or guardian consent. Yes, we are living in perilous times.

We are living in perilous times when the unborn have no protection, no rights, not even the recognition of personhood. There is no crime or penalty if you destroy the unborn child. Try disturbing the Bald Eagle's nest or crack an egg, or kill the mother and you go to prison. Great construction projects in progress costing billions, have been halted because of the environmental impact on Snail Darters. "The legs of the lame are not equal." Yes, we are living in perilous times.

We are living in perilous times when some political candidates who have no Bible convictions are wetting the proverbial finger and holding it up to see which way the political winds are blowing. Newscasters are telling us that even the President's household is divided on this issue. Many pro-life Republicans are floundering for a softer stance on the abortion issue as they bow in submission to the strident opposition of the pro-choice groups. Yes, we are living in perilous times!

What can I do to help combat the abortion evil? Edmund Burke said over 200 years ago, "The only thing necessary for triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Here are six things that we can do.

1. Pray -- as if this is the only thing that matters, for in truth, perhaps it is.

2. Educate -- yourself, your family and those within your sphere of influence. The Handbook On Abortion by Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Willke is an excellent source of information and is available at many Christian book stores.

3. Work -- for the service, educational and political groups who support the pro-life cause. For more information how and where you can help, contact National Right to Life, National Office, Suite 402, 419 7th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-22993.

4. Contribute -- time, effort, and money to the pro-life cause. Most organizations are non-profit and your stewardship is greatly needed and appreciated. Please exercise good, sound Christian judgment in these matters.

5. Vote -- and support pro-life candidates in local and general elections. We need a pro-life amendment to the Constitution and this can only happen if we continue to elect candidates who will support the right of the unborn.

6. Write -- letters to your Senators and Representatives, to your newspapers, radio and television stations, to sponsors of programs, to local government, health department, etc. Keep your letter brief, to the point and courteous. Be sure to sign your name. Let's keep the issue before the public until we get results.

Editor's Note: We apologize for the mix-up with the February 7 and 14 Words of Truth. The wrong plate was inadvertently run in the February 7 issue. We are reprinting the entire issue as it was to be printed with exception of this note and the different date, March 20. It was necessary to handle the matter in this way because of postal regulations.

A Positive Gospel



Jerri Manasco

Can one preach a positive gospel all the time and be pleasing to God? Aren't there some negatives to be proclaimed also? Certainly the word of God proclaims things to encourage faith and a positive attitude, but it also proclaims things that are AGAINST what is wrong. Not only does the New Testament promote confidence for the judgment (I John 2:28-29), but it also proclaims against those things which will rob us of salvation (Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:1-7; Ephesians 5:1-14; etc.).

People who constantly demand a "positive gospel" are suggesting that we are being too exclusive or judgmental when we speak with certainty on spiritual matters. If we dare to specify terms upon which God will accept or reject people, then we are accused of negative preaching. When we rebuke a congregation for certain improprieties, then we are "negative"! I would agree that if it is MY opinion or MY requirements that I am advocating as grounds for fellowship, then the critic has ground for his or her evaluation. However, one must deal with the fact the Bible is indeed a document that teaches an exclusiveness of God's people! Jesus preached that very thing (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus said there are some plants to be rooted up (Matthew 15:13-14). One is not negative for preaching what Jesus said! Of course balance must be maintained if the whole gospel is to be proclaimed.

I might add that those who ask, yea, DEMAND, a positive gospel probably should re-think what they're saying! Among the definitions of "positive" are the following: "admitting of no doubt; irrefutable; confident; dogmatic." (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language). If by "positive gospel" some brethren mean we should be certain and confident and preach an irrefutable doctrine, then I am a positive preacher!

If by "positive gospel" some brethren mean we should be certain and confident and preach an irrefutable doctrine, then I am a positive preacher!

I am POSITIVE that God IS (Hebrews 11:6). Any preacher who holds reservations concerning God's existence is not going to be very convincing in his preaching. Not only does God call upon us to believe that He is, but HE ALSO CALLS UPON US TO HAVE STRONG REASONS TO BELIEVE (see Isaiah 41:21). Not only can we positively declare that God is, but we can also positively declare that God is the Creator, for the Bible so teaches (Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:18-21; Hebrews 3:4). Now, if anyone with academic

credentials takes issue with that, what are to do? Are we to quit being positive about it and bow to the whim of the "learned"? If God exists, that's all there is to it! No other will do. He either exists or He doesn't.

I am POSITIVE that God made man, for that is the declaration of Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 2:7, not to mention James 3:9 and other scriptures. God made men to have dominion over all the works of His mighty hand (Genesis 1:26-27). If either atheistic or theistic evolutionist enters and denies this, shall we submit to their "alternative viewpoint" and cease being positive about what the Bible teaches? It is the critic of the Bible's teaching in this case who becomes the negative preacher!!

I am POSITIVE that man is responsible and accountable to God. The relationship between God and man was established when God gave man instructions and a warning of consequences for violating the divine trust (Genesis 2:15-17). The first human pair recognized their status and they saw the horror of their rebellion (Genesis 3:1-10). The flood demonstrated that man is accountable to God (Genesis 6-9). Solomon saw the status of man in his responsibility to God when he penned, "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The New Testament stresses the same thing over and over again (II Corinthians 5:10-11; Romans 14:12). Of this we can be POSITIVE!

I am POSITIVE that man is in sin. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That is a positive statement that admits of no interpretation beyond what it says. Both the Bible and human experience affirm that man has sinned. Broken homes, abused children, murders, abused wives, overcrowded prisons, etc. cry positively that man is a sinner. The Bible describes man's chief problem and the cause of other ills is SIN. He who would clamor for more social emphasis in the preaching or who calls for more "sympathetic understanding" becomes the "negative preacher," for he is denying the basis for

spiritual redemption.

I am POSITIVE that man needs a Redeemer, and that Redeemer is Christ Jesus. Without Christ man is lost. To even suggest or hint that people are lost outside of Christ is to immediately incur the criticism of the more inclusive brethren among us. These brethren thus become the "negative preachers" by their attempt to negate the gospel scheme. No one can save himself by his own merits (Titus 3:1-7). None can be saved without the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 26:28). Only by the cleansing blood of Jesus can we be washed from our sins (I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5). Only IN CHRIST are the spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). NOW THAT IS POSITIVE!

I am POSITIVE that man can be saved only in God's way. At least that is the testimony of the word of God! "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). How many plans of salvation has God revealed in Christ? "I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME" (John 14:6). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The New Testament promises salvation after faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and steadfastness (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 3:14-16). This may be labeled as negative exclusiveness, but we are positive that this is exactly what God teaches.

I am POSITIVE that there are only two eternal alternatives. One is eternal life and the other is eternal damnation. How can I be positive about this? Because of John 5:28-29 and Matthew 25:31-46 (just to mention two of many passages). There is the way to life and the way to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). We can be positive that this is the case.

--Rt. 7 Box 428, Boaz, Alabama 35957.

Diary Of An Unborn Child

Author Unknown

October 5 -- Today my life began. My parents do not know it yet, I am as small as a seed of an apple, but it is I already. And I am to be a girl. I shall have blond hair and blue eyes. Just about everything is settled though, even the fact that I shall love flowers.

October 19 -- Some say that I am not a real person yet, that only my mother exists. But I am a real person, just as a small crumb of bread is yet truly bread. My mother is. And I am.

October 23 -- My mouth is just beginning to open now. Just think, in a year or so I shall be laughing and later talking. I know what my first word will be: MAMA.

October 25 -- My heart began to beat today all by itself. From now on it shall gently beat for the rest of my life without ever stopping to rest! And after many years it will tire. It will stop, and then I shall die.

November 2 -- I am growing a bit every day. My arms and legs are beginning to take shape. But I have to wait a long time yet before those little legs will raise me to my mother's arms, before these little arms will be able to gather flowers and embrace my father.

November 12 -- Tiny fingers are beginning to form on

my hands. Funny how small they are! I'll be able to stroke my mother's hair with them.

November 20 -- It wasn't until today that the doctor told mom that I am living here under her heart. Oh, how happy she must be! Are you happy, mom?

November 25 -- My mom and dad are probably thinking about a name for me. But they don't even know that I am a little girl. I want to be called Kathy. I am getting so big already.

December 10 -- My hair is growing. It is smooth and bright and shiny. I wonder what kind of hair mom has.

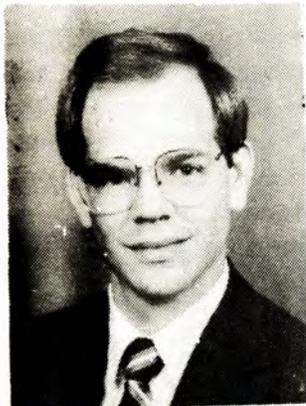
December 13 -- I am just about able to see. It is dark around me. When mom brings me into the world it will be full of sunshine and flowers. But what I want more than anything is to see my mom. How do you look, mom?

December 24 -- I wonder if mom hears the whispering of my heart? Some children come into the world a little sick. But my heart is strong and healthy. It beats so evenly: tup-tup, tup-tup. You'll have a healthy little daughter, mom!

December 28 -- Today my mother killed me.

--Via Bulletin Malden Church of Christ, Malden, MC.

God Has Done His Part -- Have You Done Yours?



Brad T. Bromling

Surely no one would contend that the world's current state of affairs is ideal. Examples of man's inhumanity to man are on every hand. War is an ever-present reality; somewhere, at every moment of the day, someone is fighting with someone else. Shameful sexual perversions are rampant; innocent men, women, and children are victimized by such deviant behavior. Millions of people continue to serve slavishly the personally elected tyrants called alcohol, opium, and cocaine. Materialism has so warped the thinking of whole nations that the poor are often treated as though they are simply getting what they deserve. Murder, theft, rape -- virtually everything short of absolute anarchy plagues planet Earth. Why? Man has left God out of his life (Romans 1:21).

Admitting that man's situation is grim, and that he is responsible for it, the question naturally arises: "What is to become of men who spurn God?" The terrifying answer is that the wrath of God is held in store for them (Romans 1:18, 32). Although few details are given, the reality of a coming judgment is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Every person who has ever lived will give an accounting to the Creator for the deeds committed while living upon the Earth (Acts 17:31; II Corinthians 5:10). Jesus Christ will some day descend to the clouds and call everyone from the tombs. Those who have lived in harmony with God's Word will be raised to enjoy eternal delight in heaven, and those who have lived in rebellion will be raised to suffer eternal punishment (John 5:28, 29). Is this fair? Abraham asked another question which shares the same answer: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). The obvious answer is, "Yes!" Hence, God's judgment is "righteous" (Romans 1:32). While man may struggle to understand the details of eternal judgment, he may be confident that God will do only that which is right. Actually, God has done His part; man must do his.

Mankind does not have to flounder in the mire of wickedness. He has within his grasp all the data he needs to enter a harmonious relationship with his Maker. God has revealed this important information in two ways. The primary revelation (i.e., divine disclosure to man) comes to man from the natural world that surrounds him. Paul wrote: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead . . ." (Romans 1:20). A cursory examination of stars in the night sky reveals God's majestic power and orderliness. David once wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Contemplation of the human ability to reason should drive one to conclude that there is a

Creator who is rational and intelligent. The intricate design of the human body should cause man to admit: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Even the weather serves as proof that God is. This point was made by Paul before a heathen audience in the city of Lystra: "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). In nearly every direction man turns, he finds evidence of God's revelation. Rebellious effort is required for him to overlook it. The evidence is so overwhelming that it is inexcusable for a man to claim he is ignorant of God's existence (Romans 1:20).

The information provided by nature should lead each man to the second source of revelation -- the Bible. In that Book one learns what the Almighty requires of His creatures; he learns how the Universe was brought into being, and of the proper place man has in his world. He also learns of God's efforts to provide him with freedom from the slavery of wickedness, and how this was ultimately accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-3). In fact, the Bible reveals **everything** that God requires in order for man to live in hope of eternal life (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:3).

The Bible reveals everything that God requires in order for man to live in hope of eternal life.

What Do You Think About The Church?

That is certainly a probing question, isn't it? Now when we think about it, we certainly need to understand what we are talking about.

First, I'm not talking about an organized group of people who make rules and regulations for others to live by. Not an ecclesiastical order set forth by men and for men.

Second, neither am I talking about a group of organized worshippers that meet several times each week, just for the purpose of worship.

Third, I'm not talking about a certain set of plans and programs for people, to keep them involved in what they might call Christianity.

Well, then, what about the church? We need to realize that the church is not an institution, but rather an organism. It is the body of Christ, Ephesians 1:22-23. Now we need to understand that it is not "like" the body, but rather that it "IS" the body.

If that is understood, then all should seek his/her function as a part of that organism. Read Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. Whether highly visible or not visible at all, every member of the body has a function to perform. If functioning properly, the body is healthy and will grow. If not, then it will become sick and weak.

Have you thought about your function in the church? What about your part in the body of Christ?

What do you think about the church?

--Edwin Myers

Because God has revealed Himself to man through nature and the Bible, the question, "What can man do?" is appropriate. God has done His part in making Himself and His Will known; He has reached down to man -- to you. Will you reach up to take His hand? He beckons you to accept His revelation and submit to His will. The book of Acts provides many examples of how people accepted God's grace, and gave themselves over wholly to His service. Briefly, the divine plan stipulates that you: (1) realize you have sinned (Romans 3:23); (2) believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He died to take those sins away (John 3:16; 8:24); (3) repent, i.e., experience sorrow for your sins and quit practicing unrighteousness (Acts 2:38; 17:30); (4) confess your faith to others (Matthew 10:32); (5) submit to God's command of baptism (be immersed in water) for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16). At this point you will be cleansed from your sins by Jesus' blood (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16). If you will love, trust, and obey God throughout the rest of your life, you will enjoy salvation now and eternal life in heaven. Why not do it today?

--Via Reasoning from Revelation, APOLOGETICS PRESS, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117-2752.

If At First You Don't Succeed. . .

Guess who, at the age of:

- 22 Failed in business
- 23 Ran for legislature and was defeated
- 24 Again failed in business
- 25 Elected to legislature
- 26 Sweetheart died
- 27 Had a nervous breakdown
- 29 Was defeated for speaker of the legislature
- 31 Was defeated for Elector
- 34 Was defeated for Congress
- 37 Was Elected to Congress
- 46 Was defeated for Senate
- 47 Was defeated for Vice-President
- 49 Was defeated for Senate
- 51 Was elected President of the United States?

Abraham Lincoln! What if he had quit?

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Hebrews 12:1-3)



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VOLUME 28

MARCH 27, 1992

NUMBER 13

Integrity In The Pulpit

C. Philip Slate

In the middle ages Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1335) wrote in his *Decameron* tales about wayward priests and nuns who falsified their vows. Two centuries later Desiderius Erasmus (cr. 1446-1536) exposed the pettiness, ignorance and immorality of bad monks and priests in *The Praise of Folly*.

In our own century Sinclair Lewis collected newspaper reports of naughty and hypocritical preachers and worked them into a blistering novel, *Elmer Gantry* (1927). More recently, Harold Robbins has portrayed in *The Spellbinder* (1982) the shallowness of the show-biz, hot-gospeling of a Vietnam veteran. A movie (now video) version of the irresponsible antics of religious leaders -- in this case a tepid, boozing and backslapping priest -- has appeared as "Mass Appeal." It is worth seeing as much for its one-liners as for its reminder of the ease with which one may falsify one's position as a herald of God.

The issue is not merely a matter of avoiding the more blatant sins of the flesh, like drunkenness and adultery. It is also a matter of avoiding dishonesty, a question of integrity.

Friends tell me I am too liberal in my estimate that not more than one in ten Christians (including preachers) can maintain Christian deportment when they come into comparatively big money. It is not appropriate to sit in judgment on a preacher who moves to another work where the financial support will allow him to pay medical bills and educate his children. It is no virtue to starve at the hands of stingy and thoughtless brethren, but greed eats like gangrene. A watching world is very sensitive to people who appear to make merchandise of the gospel.

It seems inappropriate for a preacher who gets, say, \$60,000 per year, to offer to move to another church if it will give him, say, \$80,000, bargaining like a super salesman. Similarly, it smacks more of IBM and Union Carbide than of the kingdom of God where elders try to attract a preacher purely by offering him more money.

My hearty appreciation goes to two preacher friends who turned down higher salaried positions. One refused to move for a reported \$100,000 salary where they wanted him to be the big sparkplug. He told the elders why: "Your philosophy of ministry is at variance with Ephesians 4." God bless him! The other friend refused to move in spite of a "fabulous salary," because you haven't convinced me I can do a better ministry there than I am doing here." That is tantamount to saying, "Brothers, the money is not the point for me."

A person without integrity is not a good bearer of the message. I likely speak for many others in saying that the deepest impressions on my life have been made by men and women who have learned to live under the message they teach.

I like to hear those two men preach. Somehow they make sense with their lives as well as with their lips. Memorizing few (or many) scripture texts and the sermons of others is easy enough for a glib man of moderate intelligence. But it is harder to live by self-control, selflessness, justice, humility, "agape" love, service and integrity. The development of qualities requires a different kind of effort, but it is the effort one must put forth if one wants to be a "vessel of honor" in God's house.

If a man does not spend a part of his study, prayer and meditation time in allowing God to shape his soul, in "being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (II Corinthians 3:18), in being "an imitator of God" (Ephesians 5:1), one is likely to stand in the way of one's own task as a

preacher. He is in danger of becoming somebody's Elmer Gantry.

It disturbs me that in the interviewing process our graduates are often asked how or where they stand on certain local issues (translations, Holy Spirit, divorce and remarriage, etc.) while infrequently asked about their family life, personal goals, relationship with God, money problems, devotional life, etc. When a church-preacher relationship sours it seems more often than not to be traceable to a lack of integrity on the part of one or the other -- or both!

Spurgeon said, "You don't carry flour in a coal sack," so the gospel is no to be carried in a dirty vessel. A person without integrity is not a good bearer of the message. I likely speak for many others in saying that the deepest impressions on my life have been made by men and women who have learned to live under the message they teach. It should not surprise us that Paul wrote so much to Timothy and Titus about their personal godliness and integrity.

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The Editor's Pen



David Wade



David Wade

In this issue we are featuring articles by faculty members of the Harding University Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee. These articles are lifted from the University Bulletin from 1983 to 1989. It was my privilege to study at the feet of these brethren and to profit from their counsel and instruction.

Good Mental Health For Ministers

Bill Flatt

The following suggestions can lead to better mental health for the minister.

1. *Set priorities.* A sample list of priorities would place God first in one's life; the wife, second; the children, third; ministry, fourth; and hobbies and other activities below this point in one's hierarchy of priorities.

2. *Monitor your own feelings.* Notice when signs of stress are occurring in your life: Physical, psychological, spiritual or behavioral.

3. *Serve God because of love for Him.* If the only motive you have for serving God is the fear of God, love of performing, the need for admiration, or some other need that you may have, you will not feel good about yourself and your work.

4. *Live with integrity. Tell the truth.* Do not manipulate people. Be compassionate. Do good deeds even when you are not getting recognition for it. Live in a way that will allow you to look at yourself in the mirror and basically feel good about yourself.

5. *Live a well-balanced life.* Have interests outside of church work, try to keep regular hours, try to arrange for someone else to take calls at least one day a week, limit direct contact with people, take vacations.

6. *Own your own house, if possible.* This seems to be a healthy trend among churches and ministers. The church gives the minister a housing allowance, and he buys his own house. He builds up equity and has a sense of roots.

7. *Recognize the fact that people in other careers have problems, too.* They support themselves while they are training for their career. They have mixed emotions about career choices. They do not enjoy everything that goes along with their profession. They have family stress. Families of doctors, successful businessmen, and traveling

salesmen may resent their spending so much time away from home. They have adjustment problems.

8. *Recognize your limitations.* Do things you can do well, then give yourself credit. You may dream of converting the whole world, or of tripling the size of the congregation during the next year, but realistically, you have no good reason to expect this to happen.

9. *Assign tasks to others.* An older preacher recently told me that when he first started preaching, he believed that he had to be at every meeting that took place among members of the church where he was serving, that he had to be on every committee and have a part in doing everything that needed to be done. At age sixty, he says that he can now see that this was foolish.

10. *Ask for a clear definition of your role.* Do this in a kind way, but you need to find out from the elders or from others who may be in charge what they have in mind for you.

11. *Don't mix your career role with your family role.* It is easy for problems to occur when this happens. The minister goes home and expects his wife to treat him as a minister. He is not primarily his wife's minister but her husband. He is not basically a minister to his children but a father.

12. *Meet often with the elders and ask for their direction and feedback.* This will make them feel good, and it will also give you some good direction. Learn to take supervision.

13. *Assert yourself: Talk out conflicts.* Do not just bottle up your resentments, but force yourself to go to the people who are getting under your skin and talk things out. *Let not the sun go down on your wrath* (Ephesians 4:26).

14. *Learn to give and take love.* William Glasser, a psychiatrist and founder of Reality Therapy, says that only two things are necessary for good self-esteem: Learn to give and take love, and live for

something that is worthwhile.

15. *Accept forgiveness.* A psychiatrist named Gerald May has pointed out that behind anxiety is fear; behind fear, hurt; and behind hurt guilt. We preach that God forgives, but deep down many ministers have told me that they still feel sinful, dirty, and unforgiven.

16. *Take responsibility for your stress.* I am stressful primarily because of my reaction to others, not because of their actions. Often there is little we can do about our situation, but we can do something about our reaction to the situation.

17. *Grow toward interdependence.* Take time for relationships, personal friendships both inside and outside of the church; talk over your fears, doubts, and frustrations with your peers. Pick out a preacher friend or two to meet with occasionally and talk. Learn that you are not independent.

18. *Engage yourself in continual renewal: Physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.* Take some physical exercise daily. Learn to listen to music and do other things that you enjoy doing. Learn to read books, listen to tapes. Continue your education. Take time for spirituality. Read the Bible, meditate, pray.

19. *Seek professional help if you need it.* If there are prolonged signs of stress in your life, if there are numerous conflicts, if you sometimes have suicidal thoughts, if it is difficult for you to get along at home and at work, consider going to a psychologist who shares your values or to some other well-trained Christian counselor.

20. *Prepare for retirement.* A minister needs to plan for retirement, putting something away for that day. An I.R.A. makes a lot of sense, insurance can help, and some ministers get into social security.

21. *Lean on God.* We tell others to do this, and

Continued On Page 3

"We Preach Not Ourselves. . ." (II Corinthians 4:5)

Jack Lewis

None of us who preach would admit for one moment, not even to himself, that, rather than preaching Christ, he is actually preaching himself. One also does not want to accuse his preaching brethren of preaching themselves. However, the fact that the ways of a man are right in his own eyes (Proverbs 16:2), and the fact that Paul said, "I do not know anything against myself; but I am not thereby justified" (I Corinthians 4:4), should be call enough for one who preaches to ask himself repeatedly if that is not what, in fact, is taking place. Whatever one's motives may be, does he not appear in the eyes of his hearers as one who is preaching himself?

Dan Rather and the Evening News?

Excited about what he is doing and having control of the floor, the preacher is continuously tempted to occupy large blocks of time reporting to the congregation on where he has been, what he has done, and whom he has seen. Actually, however, these activities are of far more importance to the preacher than to the audience who sits in respectful boredom during his weekly reports. The proper balance in this area is entirely a matter of individual judgment; personally, I go to church to worship the Lord, not to find out what the preacher has been doing the past week; and all the more so when a report of his activities will be in the church bulletin the next week anyway! If the preacher has studied diligently, his sermons will reflect it; people do not need to be told. If he did good works, they cannot be hidden; they do not need to be advertised. If he has not been at these tasks, his "evening news" report will not camouflage the fact.

As a grandfather, I am greatly exercised over the well-being and antics of my grandchildren. Unfortunately, other people do not seem to be as excited about them as I am, though now and then I can catch a person in a position in which he cannot avoid listening. The older I get, the more it seems

that I forget how many times before I have told that person the same story.

The preacher's wife and his children are a very important focal point of the preacher's life and activities. A report on them is good for fifteen minutes of any worship period! A congregation would not be very Christian whose members did not pour out love and care on the preacher's family when it is needed; but should the congregation be kept in the counselor's role week after week because the preacher or the preacher's wife needs an ego boost by having her name mentioned publicly or by having their children mentioned publicly? My taste would say, "Not so!" I would insist that the preacher should deal with family, as with his other personal problems, at home, not in the pulpit. A preacher known to me allowed himself to fall into the pattern of witnessing to the value of proper home situations by telling of the fine relationships which existed between himself and his wife. Every speech extolled her virtues, the close tie they had with each other, and the fine way in which they solved their problems. Though I have not asked him about it, I am sure that in his mind he was thinking, "These are the relationships the Lord intended that we have. We are trying to set a right example. I want you also to develop proper relationships!" He would probably be shocked if he knew that his hearers were reacting in the words of Shakespeare, "Me thinks the lady doth protest too much." If the relationships are actually so marvelous, will they not manifest themselves? Why must one keep on insisting that they exist? Most people are not interested in displaying their private lives for curious viewing.

Personal Taste or Gospel

I have lived long enough in the church to see enough things once counted sinful come to be completely accepted to know that we need to ask ourselves whether we are expounding our own personal tastes or are truly preaching the Gospel. A distinguished brother in my childhood said in the pulpit that he would as soon wear ruffles on his pants as to wear a wrist watch. Wrist watches at that time were exceptional, not universal as they are now. Another refused to baptize any person who smoked cigarettes unless the person first abandoned his smoking. A great deal of time was then given to the sin of coffee drinking. Much time was given to the sin of movie going. That came to an end only when the movies came into the living room via the television. The sister who cut her hair could be expected to leave the audience in tears because of the public tongue-lashing her condition received from the pulpit; and the lady who dared wear slacks was denounced no less. Time was spent in some circles on the sinfulness of using make-up. A lady sternly rebuked my wife for the use of make-up. When asked if she went to the hairdresser (which she obviously did), she stated that her preacher had said going to the hairdresser was not sinful.

One can hardly believe now that major sermon time could be devoted to expounding these matters of personal tastes. However, one must ask whether the basic problem has vanished or whether the

focus has merely shifted to new tastes.

I have observed in my own personality considerable inertia and resistance to change. A proposal of a radical change of activity inevitably evokes initially a negative reaction. The status quo is comfortable. However, one may be convinced that an action is wrong, but out of additional study may see that no scriptural principle is really being transgressed. His reaction may be entirely due to his having lived in an atmosphere where the proposed action did not prevail. The pulpit is not a place to expound one's tastes on a captive audience.

The early Restoration preachers dealt with this sort of question under the topics of faith and opinion. They said that there is one faith and ten thousand opinions and, in some cases at least, pledged themselves not to preach opinions. Their heirs have not always kept that pledge. First, we are not always sure what is faith and what is opinion. Every man convinces himself that the position he occupies is "faith" and the one the opposing man is pushing is "opinion."

This problem keeps us in strife over how many cups to use on the Lord's table, what sort of teaching material to use in classes, how to group students for teaching, how to get money to missionaries, how orphaned children are to be cared for, what version of Scripture to use, what sort of television program can be put on and how, what sort of building a congregation can build, how evangelism and edification is to be done, and how buildings can be used.

Are not all of these, and a thousand other issues, really ways in which the Devil can persuade us to preach ourselves while we think we are preaching Christ?

Personality Clashes

A gospel preacher would hardly admit publicly that he does not like one of his preaching brothers; yet actions often reveal that such a situation does exist. One observes that preachers move in circles which are best revealed in who appears on certain lectureships. These are some pretty closed corporations.

It is easy to camouflage a basic dislike by connecting attitudes with doctrinal issues. Not long ago a brother came into my office to discuss a work in which he, I, and a third brother are mutually interested. According to his report, the third brother commended my share in the work but ended his commendation with the comment, "But of course Lewis is a liberal." "Liberal" is a term of undefined parameters in our circles. It may mean that one does not use the KJV. It may mean that one was educated at a certain school or attained a certain level. It may mean that he does not follow a particular style of preaching. Hence, the term did not really clarify for everyone what is wrong with Lewis. The use of this term about anyone makes me ask, is there something doctrinally wrong with a person, or is it that some people just do not care for some other people?

Sometime ago a brother said to me, "There is

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Good Mental Health For Ministers

Continued From Page 2

we need to remind ourselves of the same lesson over and over again. God has said that he will be with us always, that he will give us strength, that he will sustain us. *He comes and makes his abode with us* (John 14:23).

In stressful situations, we need to remember that someday glory is waiting for those who serve well. Paul's admonition to the Galatians is appropriate for faithful servants of Christ: *Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not* (Galatians 6:9).

"We Preach Not Ourselves. . ." (II Corinthians 4:5)

Continued From Page 3

something in the personality of _____ which rankles _____." It was true that the second brother was a critic of the work of the first one. The speaker continued, "You ought to cultivate the friendship of _____. He is going to be a very important person." The speaker's admonition did not make much difference. The one thing I never learned is the art of apple polishing. His remarks did make me raise the question of how much of preaching is proclaiming the Gospel and how much of it is seeking to gain the favor of the right people. How much of what one opposes is opposed merely because of one's dislike of the people who are connected with it?

At a recent lectureship a brother was speaking of the future of the church, giving his reasons for his optimistic outlook. One of the striking points he

made was that the future of the church is bright because we have a number of well-trained, capable, young preachers who like each other; but I am equally sure that some, for one reason or another, did not like each other.

An extended lifetime of preaching will furnish one an ample supply of examples of people who did not do what they ought to have done. Some of these acts may be injurious to others. It is certainly hard to love one's enemies. Franklin perhaps dealt with the problem best when he said, "Be at peace with your neighbors and at war with your vices." The Psalmist put it, "Trust the Lord and do good." If the Devil can get you centered on your likes and dislikes, and can get you into a struggle with your fellow preachers, he could find no better way in which to get you preaching yourself instead of

Christ.

I am struggling diligently to learn the personal meaning of two statements from Paul. The first is:

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am just here for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of partisanship, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in that I rejoice (Philippians 1:15-18).

The second is,

For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! (I Corinthians 9:16b).

When Is It Time To Leave The Church?

Richard Oster

A well-known adage is that "politics make strange bedfellows." The same could be noted about those so dissatisfied with specific local congregations that they leave. Sometimes all these Christians seem to have in common is their way of dealing with their own dissatisfaction with other Christians. The last decade in particular has seen the emergence of a mixed lot of discontented Christians leaving congregations. Or, if the number of those dissatisfied is large enough, or its leadership forceful enough, then they stay and run others off or split the congregation. If it has not been done yet, someone ought to do a study of split and fractured congregations within the last decade to see why it happened and what happened to those who retained the property and to those who started meeting elsewhere. Notwithstanding the clear value of this type of study in the final analysis, one must, nevertheless, raise some questions and introduce certain standards from God's Word in evaluating this phenomenon.

In the first place, it must be acknowledged that many of the complaints voiced by those who leave or run others off are substantial in nature and accurate in assessment. Let us consider a sampling of various accusations by setting out some of the (stereo) typical groups.

1. Group one, usually intellectual, urbane and wealthy, believes that its old congregation was too unenlightened, backward, unconcerned with new trends and basically a social embarrassment. With the socialization of the 1960s and 70s, many of these Christians became dissatisfied with the old Church of Christ and decided to leave it, and could easily afford to finance new beginnings.

2. Another group is confident that its parent congregation was composed primarily of carnal Christians who knew little or nothing of discipleship, total commitment, and bearing fruit. This group left because of its convictions regarding idealistic and perfectionistic standards from God.

3. Our third group would not really enjoy the company of group two. Rather, it eschews the paths, whether old or new, of outreach and evangelism and opts for a rarefied spirituality of enrichment weekends, spiritual seminars, and the warmth of the nuclear family. This group bifurcates inner regeneration and outward activism and is typically preoccupied with the former.

4. Not to be outdone or unheard, the fourth group, the old guard, is firmly convicted that the church has drifted into liberalism, denominationalism, liberal versions of the Bible, new-fangled methods, and lax morals, all of which is a harbinger of

apostasy and signals the need to fracture once again an already fragile brotherhood.

5. Then, of course, there is the spirit-lead, sweet-on-Jesus, and warmly pietistic persuasion that just wants to praise (usually in small groups), talk about Jesus, witness, and share some beliefs and experiences. Those of this group are often dissatisfied because no one in the church they left seemed to be intimate enough or acquainted with the warm spiritual feelings like they had developed.

As stated earlier, each group has a justifiable concern! The church is not enlightened enough, not committed enough, not spiritual enough, not sound enough, and surely not pious enough. One could hardly argue with the diagnosis of these brotherhood physicians and therapists. It is, rather, the medicine that these individuals prescribe that is under scrutiny. It may just be that their suggested cures are no better than the illness they despise.

In the first place, the danger and shallowness of the "I'll take my marbles and go elsewhere" syndrome is that it tends to reflect a "one issue" mentality. All of the concerns and issues mentioned above (as well as a host of others) are important for the church, but no one of them by itself is the totality of the Gospel. Heresy has been defined as "taking part of the truth and making it all of the truth." If that is so, then all of these could tend toward heresy. In the Body of Christ, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (I Corinthians 12:21).

The greatest evidence that our attitude of splitting, leaving, and running others off is unwarranted is the clarion testimony of the New Testament churches. Whether one searches the Pauline letters and Acts or the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Revelation, the picture is the same. Is it not more than coincidental that the rank and file of the early church was never counseled to leave the troubled congregations that they were in and to start a new one?

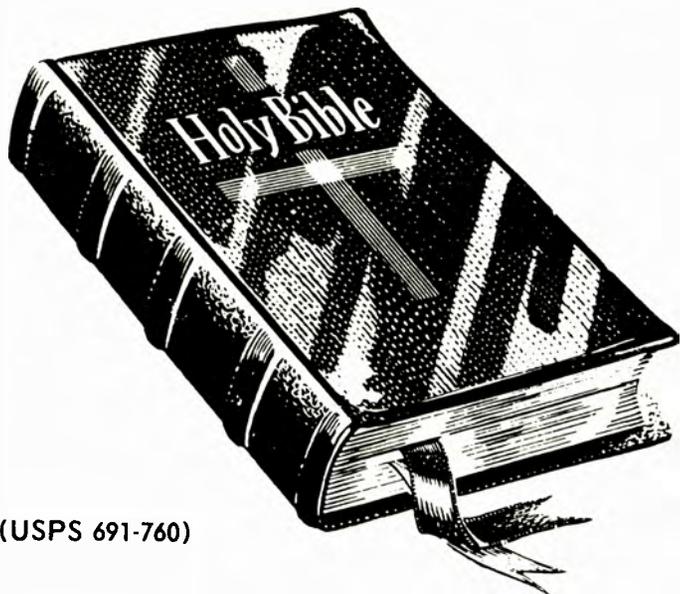
Let us rehearse the testimony! Paul writes to churches with carnal Christians, tells some of them that destruction is imminent without repentance, and nowhere admonishes other members in those congregations to defect or begin new house churches. He even acknowledges that some are subscribing to false doctrine, while others are quenching the Spirit. No matter how bad the condition of the church, Paul never dealt with the aberrations by prescribing the cure that the enlightened/committed/sound/spiritual/pious/remnant pull out and start a new congregation.

From the Island of Patmos, John wrote to several

churches with diverse problems. Ephesus was so doctrinally strait-laced that it had choked out its first love. Pergamum was a mixture of faithful Christians and those who had given in to worldliness and immorality. The congregation at Thyatira was composed of at least two groups. One followed a woman preacher and her carnal worldliness. The same congregation had a second group who had not yet given in to Satan's lead. John's advice to them in the midst of a sick congregation was to "hang in there" and continue to live faithfully as they had been doing in the past. The same approach is found throughout John's counsel to the other churches in the Roman province of Asia. He never suggested breaking off, but only remaining faithful where you are.

The greatest evidence that our attitude of splitting, leaving, and running others off is unwarranted is the clarion testimony of the New Testament churches. Whether one searches the Pauline letters and Acts or the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Revelation, the picture is the same. Is it not more than coincidental that the rank and file of the early church was never counseled to leave the troubled congregations that they were in and to start a new one?

How, then, does one answer the main question, "When is it time to leave the church?" It seems to me that one must take seriously the lack of support in the apostolic authors for a "start a new congregation" solution, whether the "new congregation" meets in a building or home. Apparently, the apostles thought one could be faithful to God even when affiliated with other Christians who were not. Unless one today is in a congregation characterized by greater sins of apostasy, sterility, apathy, etc., than the churches of the first century, then one ought to be very careful before starting another "one issue" congregation which itself will soon be plagued with its own agenda of sin and unfaithfulness.



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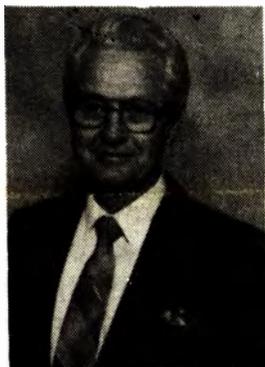
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NUMBER 14

How Often Should Christians Observe The Lord's Supper?



Cecil Corkren

Many religious people believe there is no set pattern given as how often this memorial is to be observed. Many reason that to observe the Lord's Supper weekly would make it trite. However, I do not know of any religious group that reasons the same way relative to the collection

on the first day of each week! Some only observe the Supper annually, or quarterly, and to my surprise I have heard of brethren in the Lord's church observing this feast on Thursday night. This difference of opinion reflects a need for a study on the subject "HOW OFTEN SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?" Many do not understand the significance of the Christian's responsibility in, nor the Lord's required Day of Observance of The Lord's Supper.

Observing The Lord's Supper is not optional; but a command from God. The Lord himself instituted this memorial in his memory (I Corinthians 11:23-29). The Supper is to remind us of the death of our risen Saviour. The Lord instituted the Supper as recorded in Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; and Luke 22:19-20, 30. The place he said they would later eat the Supper would be in the kingdom (Luke 22:30). We eat the Lord's Supper remembering his body and his blood which was sacrificed for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28).

"By what authority doest thou these things?" was asked our Lord by the chief priests and elders in Matthew 21:23. We may ask by what authority Christ had? "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me" (John 7:16). "But as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28). His

word will judge us in the last days. ". . . For I have not spoken of my self; but the Father which sent me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:48-49). The Lord's Supper came from God.

The New Testament clearly teaches as to how often the early disciples observed the Lord's Supper. Pentecost is the first meeting of the Lord's church. In Acts 2:42 we find this infant church "Continuing stedfast in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." The breaking of bread was the Lord's Supper for we observe in verse 46 of Acts 2 that the common meal was eaten from house to house. Pentecost fell on the first day of the week according to Leviticus 23:15-16. The Sabbath Day was the seventh day of the week. Thus in numbering seven weeks would be forty-nine days; therefore, the fiftieth day would be the first day of the week. The word Pentecost means fifty. Fifty days from the Jewish Passover the early church had it's initial beginning on the first day of the week. Thus the Lord's Supper was eaten at the first service of the church.

Paul, on his missionary journey in Acts 20:7, came to Troas. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break

bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; continued his speech until midnight." The disciples met for the purpose of breaking bread, not just to hear Paul preach. Paul's preaching was an added blessing. The breaking of bread was the Lord's Supper, and it was observed upon the first day of the week. Later in Acts 20:10-11 they ate a common meal.

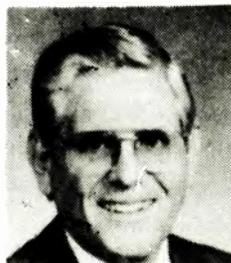
Observing The Lord's Supper is not optional; but a command from God.

If we want to be scriptural and follow the teaching of the scriptures we will meet and eat the Lord's Supper and teach other Christian to do so. How often? Paul said, "For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup" you declare the Lord's death until he comes again (I Corinthians 11:26).

Your employer agrees to pay you on Friday. How often do you expect to be paid? This question is needless, and so it is with respect to the Lord's Supper. Faithful Christians meet every first day of the week to break bread.

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

Sloppy Tolerance



John Gipson

the Bible and its teachings stand on an even plane with everything in Protestantism, Catholicism,

I heard a lady say, "I believe in all religions, and whatever works for you is fine with me." That sounds very tolerant, but is is sloppy at best. If you carry that idea to its logical conclusion then you will have to admit that

Hinduism, Communism and Father Divine-ism. They are all equally true. There is nothing to choose between them. They are all of equal value. If that be the case then none of them is of any value. It means that we can know nothing about religion.

Where would we be in science or politics, or any other field, if we followed such sloppy reasoning? You know the answer to that as well as I. One idea

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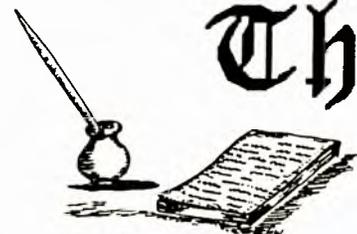
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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Food And Fellowship



David Wade

Eating and drinking were significant acts in the biblical world. Besides meeting the physical needs, they were symbolic of both friendship and joint participation. Covenants were ratified, marriages were celebrated, birthdays, coronations, and even national 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 (vs. 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.

Opportunity And Hard Work



Dalton Key

Too many of us fail to recognize opportunity when it comes our way because it comes disguised as hard work.

We look for the quick-fix, the windfall, the easy way, and seem not to notice any solutions to our problems which require energy, work or sacrifice.

We pray for God's help. We plead for "showers of blessing." Yet we refuse to do our part -- we fail to do what we are able to do -- we all too often do nothing but sit back and wait for heaven to pour forth the gifts we seek. Our God is a gracious and liberal giver, but he is no genie in a bottle.

Sloppy Tolerance

Continued From Page 1

is as good as another? Don't make me laugh . . . or cry!

I know one thing. Jesus did not believe in that kind of tolerance. If he had, he never would have attacked the religious leaders of his day.

There is as much difference between truth and falsehood as there is between daylight and dark. And saying that they are one and the same doesn't make it so.

There is as much difference between truth and falsehood as there is between daylight and dark. And saying that they are one and the same doesn't make it so.

I believe that Cicero was right when he said, "Our minds possess by nature an insatiable desire to know the truth."

Jesus Christ declared that God's word is the truth (John 17:17), and that he is the truth (John 14:6). He promised his disciples that when the Spirit came they would be guided into all truth (John 16:13). He further stated that in knowing the truth we would be made free (John 8:32). It is that truth which I am interested in, and not "your" truth or "my" truth.

I keep remembering that one of these days God "will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth" (Psalm 96:13).

--Little Rock, Arkansas.

The Church And The Kingdom



W. A. Holley

Here is a very important Bible subject. If one never understands the Scriptural relationship of the church and the kingdom of God, one will never understand the true teaching of the Bible. We sincerely ask you to cast aside all preconceived notions and ideas and

listen to what is plainly taught in Holy Writ. Will you do it?

Both the church and the kingdom were included in the early preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the early disciples. Please read these references: Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9. In those days the kingdom was "at hand."

Listen to what Jesus taught them: "... The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:14-15). What does "at hand" mean? Well, it means close by, near, impending. Read II Timothy 4:6-8 to see how Paul used this term. Paul taught that his death was "at hand." What was his meaning? Be honest, now! Some readers may stumble over Jesus saying, "repent, and believe," but one should not stumble, because He was teaching the Jews to repent of their sins against God and believe the gospel of the coming kingdom which had not been preached before. We should remember that the

Opportunity And Hard Work

Continued From Page 2

Remember this: God often answers prayer by providing an open door, an opportunity for us to work, to stretch, and yes, to strain toward the blessings we desire.

Our God is a gracious and liberal giver, but he is no genie in a bottle.

When Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," in Matthew 6:11, he wasn't demanding heaven to drop down freshly baked loaves; he was acknowledging that all we have -- even through and by our own labors -- is the result of God's goodness and grace. God provides opportunity. He supplies the needed strength. But we must do what we are able to do -- we must roll up our sleeves and go to work!

Don't overlook opportunity simply because work-- even hard work -- is involved.

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order of mention is not always the order of occurrence. For example, have you ever heard one say, "I must put on my shoes and socks," or "I will put on my coat and vest?" Enough said!!

While Jesus lived, the kingdom was yet in the future (Matthew 16:13-19). "I will build my church" is in the future tense. Mark 9:1 says: "Verily, I say unto you, That 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." Friends, it is fair to say that if the kingdom of God has not yet come, some of those are still living now, and would be almost 2,000 years of age. As far as age is concerned, they would put Methuselah to shame! (Genesis 5:25-27).

The church of kingdom of God was not established in the days of Adam and Eve, nor in the days of Noah, nor in the days of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-12; 16:18-19), nor was it established during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was dead and buried before Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 14:1-2; 16:13-19).

The church and the kingdom are one institution. Jesus used the two words interchangeably (Matthew 16:18-19). Remember, Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom, but if the kingdom had not then been established, why did he use the keys of the kingdom on the church? Did Peter make a mistake? We strongly suggest that Acts 1:7-8; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47, be studied closely. The truth is that the first Christians were in the kingdom then (Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

We shall now offer some conclusive considerations: Both the church and the kingdom have the same terms of entrance. To enter either sinners must be "born again . . . born of water and of the Spirit." Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). One is begotten of God when one believes obediently (I John 5:1). The steps of faith are: faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). One does not obey one set of rules to become a member of the church, and obey another set of rules to become a citizen in the kingdom.

Both the church and the kingdom have but one Head . . . the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13-18; Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus is King of his kingdom (Acts 17:7; I Timothy 6:13-16; Revelation 1:9; 17:14; 19:16). If premillennialists are right in their contention, Jesus now is not King, because His kingdom is yet to be established. How ridiculous!

Both the kingdom and the church have law, the Holy Scriptures (II Timothy 3:15-17; Acts 2:36-38; I Peter 4:11; Revelation 22:18-19).

Both the church and the kingdom have the same subjects. These are the brethren, the saved, the first-born ones (literal translation), Christians (Acts 2:36-38; Hebrews 12:23; I Peter 4:15-16; Acts 11:26; 26:28).

Both the church and the kingdom come from the same seed. Matthew 13:19, mentions the word, or seed of the kingdom. Luke 8:11, says, "The seed is

the word of God." Every seed bring forth fruit after its kind (Genesis 1:11-12). There is God's law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8). If the farmer sows corn, he does not reap wheat from that planting. This is an unalterable law which no scientist can change.

If the church and the kingdom are not the same, then the seed which is the word of God produces two kinds of fruit . . . some seed produces the church . . . some seed produces the kingdom. This sort of thing is contrary to all nature and to all divine revelation. Evidently, many preachers never contemplate what kind of monstrosities they create when they begin twisting and bending the Scriptures to their own ends (II Peter 3:16).

Evidently, many preachers never contemplate what kind of monstrosities they create when they begin twisting and bending the Scriptures to their own ends.

Jesus said, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30).

From the foregoing quotation, we learn that the Lord's Supper is in Christ's kingdom. Are we right? But the church of Christ at Corinth ate the Lord's Supper each Lord's day (I Corinthians 16:1-2; I Corinthians 11:23-34). Therefore, the only biblical conclusion reasonable minds can reach is that the Corinthian Christians were in the kingdom. Furthermore, if the kingdom has not been established as yet, we have no right to eat the Lord's Supper, and will not until the premillennial age dawns upon us. The premillennial age is a figment of someone's imagination, but has no support in the truth of the gospel.

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The First Century Christians

Kenneth McClain

The first century Christians were members of the Lord's church and met on the first day of the week to worship (Acts 20:7); to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 11:17-34); to sing hymns of praise (Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16, 17); to pray together (Acts 2:42; I Thessalonians 5:17); to give of their means to support the church, the greatest work in the world (I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 9:6, 7); and to receive the greatest message man can receive, God's word (Acts 2:42; 20:7).

These Christians worked and worshipped

Continued On Page 4

The Allegory Of Hagar And Sarah



W. Gaddys Roy presents the law in an allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Galatians 4:21-31).

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Abraham as he impatiently waited and had lost faith in God's promise, took Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden, to be his wife (Genesis 16:3). Ishmael was born of her after the flesh. Isaac, Abraham and Sarah's son, was born by promise (Galatians 4:22, 23; Genesis 18:10-14; 21:2). Hagar, a handmaid, represented the old covenant of bondage, while Sarah, a free woman, represented the new covenant of freedom (Galatians 4:24; 26; Genesis 16:15; 21:2). Ishmael, by the fleshly birth, represented the Jewish church. Isaac, born of promise, represents the church of Christ which is entered by a spiritual birth (Galatians 4:24; 26; Romans 9:7-8; Hebrews 11:11; John 3:5-8).

The two sons of Abraham are two social ranks. Ishmael was born in domestic bondage, and Isaac in domestic freedom (Genesis 16:15; 21:2; 18:10-14). By this Paul was showing two spiritual ranks. The Jewish system was in bondage, but Christians have spiritual liberty in Christ (Galatians 3:10-12; 5:1, 13). This further shows the superiority of the gospel of Christ over the law of Moses, and that the gospel of Christ is not something that is just attached, or patched on, to the law of Moses (Matthew 9:16, 17; Luke 5:36-39).

The characters of Ishmael and Isaac further illustrate the Jewish church and the church of Christ. Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Genesis 16:12; 21:9; Galatians 4:29). The Jews, and especially their rulers, were great persecutors of the church until Judaism was finally brought down at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Acts 8:1; 9:1, 2).

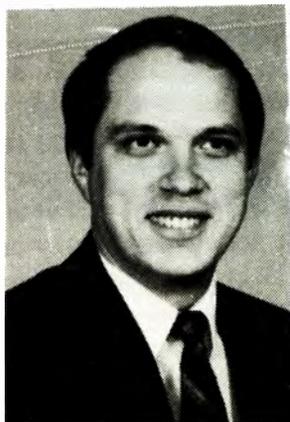
There were two physical and spiritual inheritances represented in the allegory. Ishmael received a slave's portion of bread and water (Genesis 21:14). Isaac received all his father's possessions and blessings (Genesis 25:5). The Jews inherited the land of Canaan, which corresponds to the slave's portion that Ishmael received. Christians inherit all of God's favor and blessings (Romans 8:28; John 8:35; Galatians 3:8, 22). It should be observed that God said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12; Romans 9:7). This powerfully refutes the Moslem or Islam doctrine, or more properly called, after its founder, Mohammedanism. Mohammed was of Arabic descent. He was supposed to be, and most likely was, a descendant of Ishmael, while the promised seed of Abraham was to be through Isaac (Genesis 21:12).

Hagar and Ishmael received no inheritance, with the son of the free woman (Genesis 21:10-12; Galatians 4:30, 31). The old covenant brought a penalty for sin, but the best the Jews could expect in forgiveness was to offer their animal sacrifices and there was a "remembrance made of sin year by year" (Hebrews 10:3). The law with fleshly Israel ended, and the Christians' inheritance is with spiritual Israel (Galatians 3:8, 29; 4:28-31; Romans 8:17). Isaac, the son of the free woman, was the child of promise (Genesis 18:10-14; 21:2). Therefore, Christians through the new covenant

received the promise that God made to Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8, 16, 26-29; 4:28; Acts 3:25). Jews are lost under the old covenant (Romans 3:9, 23; Hebrews 10:4). The new covenant is now in force (II Corinthians 3:6-11). Christians are saved under the new covenant and become heirs of the promise which God made to Abraham when they are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-29).

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Fervent Prayer



Ted Burleson

Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:13-16, New King James Version).

It is wonderful to know that God hears our prayers and that they do make a difference. We are so foolish to believe "what is to be will be" and neglect to pray. "What is to be will be" is a statement that we cannot accept if we believe what James has written. We must accept the fact that our prayers will avail much!

If our prayers are going to make a difference in the way God directs our lives, what should we pray for? Paul assured the church at Rome that "... the Spirit also helps our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

God wants us to communicate with Him so we can learn more of His love as we put our desires and longings into words.

God knows what we need even before we ask (Matthew 6:8). Why ask then? As a parent, I usually know what my boys want for their birthday even before they tell me. I've overheard their discussions and listened to their wish list long before June or September rolls around. But I cherish those times of communication with my boys. I want to hear their petitions because I learn about their reasoning processes and their desires

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the

from listening to them. God wants us to communicate with Him so we can learn more of His love as we put our desires and longings into words.

With our human minds, it is hard to imagine what God can accomplish. We cannot comprehend that nothing is impossible with God (Matthew 19:26). God is truly able to do things we have never imagined. Paul, inspired by the Spirit, wrote, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Our prayers have an effect on God for He hears us and our prayers avail much. God can do more than we've even imagined and knows even before we ask. We will be neglecting a great, privileged blessing if we neglect prayer.

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The First Century Christians

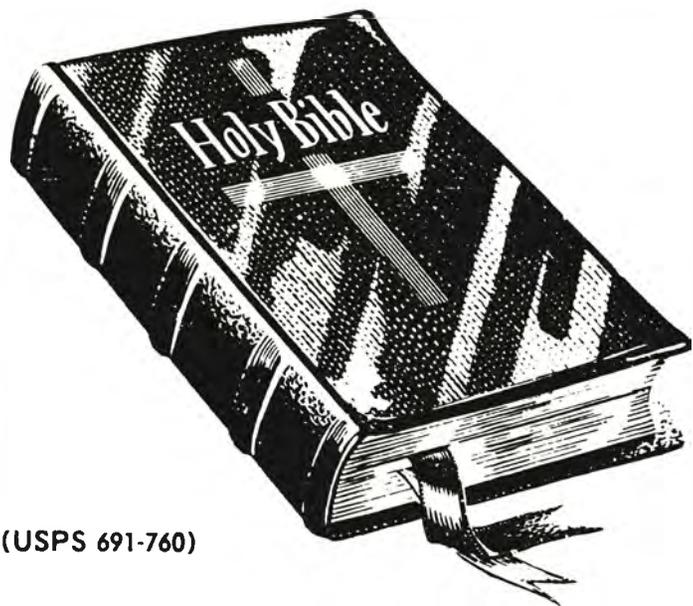
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together in local churches, independent of each other, had no central organization governing them. Each local church was governed by a group of elders (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5). These local churches were linked only by their common ties to Christ, who is the head of the church which He built.

If we are members of the same church as the first century Christians we must proclaim the same message -- the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We will teach that men must believe in Christ and confess that faith. We will teach that men must return from sin and be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27). We will teach that men must submit to Christ as did the first century Christians, and be added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47).

If we are true Christians we will seek to restore the New Testament pattern in purpose, doctrine, worship, organization, life and joy. The purpose of Christ's church then and now is the same -- to seek and to save the lost world (Luke 19:10).

--2842 Shelby Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46203.



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Word Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble-Fest
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the
cts 26:25

VOLUME 28

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Christ Is Risen



Bobby Key

Some years ago one who had been a faithful preacher of the gospel made the following statement. "I no longer consider the evidence for the resurrection of Christ sufficient to establish that fact beyond doubt. Therefore, I no longer mention the resurrection in my preaching."

This preacher has since lost his faith completely, and no longer makes any attempt to serve our Lord. How depressing.

The resurrection of Christ is the very heart of Christianity. It is the miracle of all miracles. If Christ was raised from the dead He was God, and nothing the Bible says about Him is impossible. If He was not raised, none of the other miracles can matter at all, He was an imposter, and all our hope of another life was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.

The apostle Paul asked King Herod, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" We plant a seed in the earth. It is a lifeless thing according to all outward appearances; even with a microscope the germ of life is invisible. Given the proper circumstances this seed will burst forth into a living, growing plant. Could not the same power who put that invisible germ of life into the grain of wheat cause a man to rise and live again? There is in each grain of wheat a bit of life which enables it to throw off the body that we see and from earth and air fashion a new body, so much like the old one that we can scarcely tell the one from the other. There is no doubt that my soul will be clothed with a new body suited to its new existence when this earthly frame has crumbled into the dust. "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (I Corinthians 15:35-38).

It is a mystery to me how a student of the Bible could say that evidence for the resurrection of Christ is insufficient. No event in history is better

documented. The Christ presented many infallible proofs during the forty days from His resurrection to His ascension.

Christianity would never have gotten off the ground if Christ had not risen. The Christian religion itself stands as a monument to the fact that Jesus arose.

Christianity would never have gotten off the ground if Christ had not risen. The Christian religion itself stands as a monument to the fact that Jesus arose.

"Christ is risen" was the message of the apostles and early disciples. They preached this message against a skeptical, heathen background. People by the thousands believed, and they obeyed the gospel, living their lives as if they knew for a fact

that He had risen. Not only had many of them seen Him (about 500 brethren at one time), but those who had not seen Him were convinced by their testimony. The very core of New Testament teaching in the first century was the resurrection of Christ. This gave life to the gospel.

To make the matter even more convincing, the disciples preached the resurrection of Christ in the very city where He had been crucified. If there was ever anyone in a position to deny the resurrection it would have been the people who were there. They did not deny it! They accepted it as a fact. Three thousand Jews were so convinced of His resurrection that they repented and were baptized the first day the message was preached.

From Jerusalem the religion of Christ spread to Antioch and finally to the shores of Europe. In less than fifty years it had gone into all the civilized world.

Thanks be unto God, we serve a risen Lord!
--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

What They Learned At The Grave Of Jesus



Winfred Clark

of the Lord's birth; they all lead us to the place of his burial and resurrection. They are telling us that there are some lessons that we dare not miss.

There are a number of lessons that those women were able to learn at the grave of our Lord. These were very valuable to them and they can also be to us. You will find the account of their visit recorded in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20. Not all the writers lead us to the place

There are some things that should be taken to heart when we come to see through their writing the grave that was empty because of our Lord's glorious resurrection. We are allowed to listen to some of the things that were said and we are allowed to see through their eyes some of the things they were able to see. Yes, what they would learn at the grave of our Lord would be good for all of us. After all, this is one of the most important events that took place while Jesus was on this earth.

That Fears Can Be Quieted

As the women came to the tomb there were some

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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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The Best Thing



John Gipson

"The best thing a parent can do for a child," said Norman Vincent Peal, "is to take him to church, not send him -- take him, not intermittently but regularly every Sunday and let him saturate his unconscious mind with the great ideals of religion. Let him hear these truths from the pulpit until they become a part of his life, the noblest passages from the Bible. Let him learn to love the great hymns of the Church, which sing of faith and goodness and strength of character. Let him hear sermons: sometimes they may indeed be dull and musty, and frequently they may be over his head, but they will give him the idea that honor, righteousness, and decency are virtues to be cultivated. He will get the conviction so deeply rooted in his mind that it will never be eradicated, that a real man is one of character and honor."

Our sophisticated policy of taking a "hands off" attitude toward our children is more than dumb. It is asinine. Every parent has a responsibility before God which cannot be abrogated (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4).

Which parent among us has not wrestled with the problem of television? Our children have been captured by it. They have little time for books or play. Favorite TV programs command their time, and shape their lives. They are hooked on Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles with all of its combat and

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Why The Resurrection?



David Wade

Doubters and scoffers have disputed the fact of the resurrection of the dead in every age (Acts 17:32; I Corinthians 15:12). The New Testament clearly attests to the resurrection of Christ from the grave (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-7, John 20:1-9). In addition, Jesus predicts that the "hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). The fact that Jesus raised the widow's son (Luke 7), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8) and Lazarus (John 11) underscores the power of God to raise all the dead as Jesus has promised.

While much preaching and writing concerns itself with the reality of the resurrection, we seem to fall short in sharing the "why" of the resurrection. Why was Christ raised from the dead? Why are our bodies to be raised from the dead? Let me share with you five reasons for the resurrection.

1) The resurrection of Christ establishes Jesus as the son of God with power (Romans 1:4). Someone may say, "According to John 20:30-31, didn't Jesus' signs and miracles prove him to be the son of God?" Yes, but these signs, separate from his own resurrection, did not; for indeed, others performed similar signs. It is by his own resurrection from the grave that God declares Jesus to be the "son of God with power" (Romans 1:4).

His death, burial and resurrection are essential elements of the gospel fulfilling the scriptures (I Corinthians 15:1-4). By his resurrection, Jesus is distinguished from all pagan deities and self-proclaimed Messiahs. Without his resurrection, there would be no "good news." Lost humanity would still be awaiting a savior from heaven. The resurrection of Christ is unique. He has been raised to never to die again (Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 7:25). By his resurrection, he is declared to be the "son of God with power."

2) The resurrection of Christ is a sign verifying the promise that there is life beyond the grave. Without the resurrection of Christ, the promise of life beyond the grave would seem somewhat empty and hollow. It was the purpose of signs to confirm the word (Mark 16:20). Before raising Lazarus, Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Jesus promised "abundant living" (John 10:10),

and "everlasting life" (John 3:16). He said, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18). John declares, "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 3:2). God's word, which promises life beyond the grave, is ultimately confirmed by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

3) By the resurrection of Christ, God is able to reclaim his holy temple. In ancient times, God's glory resided in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel 1). By the time of Christ, God's glory had long since departed from the temple (Ezekiel 11), and faithless Israel's house was left desolate (Matthew 23:38). In the context of the New Testament age, Paul declared that God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). Speaking of his body, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19-21). Likewise, Paul declares that "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 6:19), and that the church is "the temple of God" (I Corinthians 3:16).

The human body is the only physical substance that awaits transformation and reclamation. By the resurrection, God will transform and reclaim his temple, both the good and the bad (I Corinthians 15:50-58). Jesus refers to this great event as "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). The fact that "God raised up Christ" is the assurance that we will also be "raised in glory" (I Corinthians 15:15, 43).

4) The resurrection of Christ gives power to the gospel. Jesus is "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

If Christ were no raised, the New Testament would be a false witness, we would yet be in our sins, and would be most miserable (I Corinthians 15:12-19). Because Christ has risen from the grave, the gospel is empowered to transform our lives into God's new creation (II Corinthians 5:17).

5) The resurrection of Christ fills our hearts with hope. Paul said, "of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6). Because of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, Paul urges Christians to "sorrow not even as others which have no hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13). Peter declares, "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, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:3-4).

What They Learned At The Grave Of Jesus

Continued From Page 1

anxious moments. They had been concerned about the stone and how it would be rolled away and the grave empty. In addition, they will find angels at the place (Luke 24:4-5). All of this would strike fear into the heart of mortals. If any of us had been there, no doubt the same kinds of fears would have gripped our hearts. Indeed, a grave is a foreboding place. But take a moment to see what the angels will say to those dear ladies. The first words were these, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified" (Matthew 28:5). Those words were calculated to say that you have no reason to fear. That could be hard to believe in the face of some of the things those people had faced. But the angel knew that and did not mock their fears but rather would seek to help them overcome their fears.

There are times in our lives when fears arise that can paralyze us and overwhelm us. But God knows all of this, and that is the reason that so often he will say, "fear not." In fact, you will find this phrase more than sixty times in your Bible. God would say to such a man as Abraham, "Fear not" (Genesis 15:1). Time and time again you will find this phrase in the New Testament.

There are times in our lives when we have God's reassuring words, "Fear not." Such was the case when Jesus attempted to still the fears of his disciples as they would face an alien world. He would speak of God's care of the sparrows and the fact that the hairs of our heads are numbered. To this he would say, "Fear ye not therefore" (Luke 12:7). Surely this kind of reassurance is still needed.

We would surely believe that word of the angels should have stilled the fears of those ladies at the grave. Should we be any less sure of God's word to us when he says, "fear not"?

That God Knows Our Concerns

Go back to the grave of Jesus and listen to what the angel had to say. He said, "I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified" (Matthew 28:5). There may have been a number of people that would not know what those ladies were doing at the tomb that early in the morning. There could have even been some of their close friends that would not know what they were doing, but the angel said, "I know." That would surely help. To know that there was someone who could understand what they were trying to do and the reason they were trying to do this. They would be comforted to know that someone understood the things that concerned them.

But that is always the case with God. He knows our concerns and cares. he will not misinterpret our concerns. He will not misunderstand the motives. He knows all our cares. In fact, Peter could say by experience and inspiration, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). If God did not care about our cares we

would not have the liberty to cast them upon him.

Not all the writers lead us to the place of the Lord's birth; they all lead us to the place of his burial and resurrection. They are telling us that there are some lessons that we dare not miss.

That Honest Investigation Is Good For Us

It is a wonderful thing to know that God's plans and purposes are open to investigation. He is not afraid for men to seek the facts. Notice what the

angel would say, "Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:8). Those ladies could enter the grave. They could examine the evidence and come to a proper conclusion. They could evaluate the facts. When they do this, they will have the evidence upon which their faith could rest. The angel implied that they could investigate for themselves. They were not going to do it for them. What they would learn by such investigation would surely have a lasting effect on their lives from that day forward.

By way of conclusion, there are some things that we learn at the grave of Jesus. When we have learned them, we will have something worthwhile to tell, and what we tell, the whole world needs to know.

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The Best Thing

Continued From Page 2

violence. They are introduced to the crudeness and irreverence of the Simpsons. They are exposed through the commercials to toys that are disgusting in both name and function. They are thrown into an environment saturated with foul language, cruelty, aggression, sex, greed, lust and materialism.

Unless the home takes action our children will not have faith. Gone are the days when the Bible could be found on the coffee table, and *Hurlbut's Story of the Bible* close by, yet we expect our children to have the same faith that was in-stilled in

us by our parents.

Our sophisticated policy of taking a "hands off" attitude toward our children is more than dumb. It is asinine. Every parent has a responsibility before God which cannot be abrogated (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4).

We might well argue over whether the "best thing" is taking our children to church, but I would place it close to the teaching we do at home, and the kind of lives we live before them.

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Isaac And Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

There is no place where the Bible says that Isaac is a type of Christ. Yet, there are some striking similarities and resemblances which we can study with great profit.

When Isaac and Jesus came into the world, each fulfilled a promise. Isaac was a son of promise. God had promised Abraham that through him, all families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). Jesus fulfilled that promise, the promise of the prophets, and the promise that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16; 4:4-5; Isaiah 7:14; Jeremiah 31:22; Zechariah 6:12, 13). The births of both Isaac and Jesus were by divine intervention. Isaac was born when Sarah was past the age of child-bearing

(Hebrews 11:11; Genesis 18:9-14). Jesus was born of a virgin -- a biological miracle -- and, therefore, was born through divine intervention (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:30-35).

There is some similarity in their names. The name, Isaac, signifies laughter or rejoicing (Genesis 21:1-7). The name, Jesus, means saviour (Matthew 1:21). Jesus brought joy and gladness into the world (Luke 2:8-14). There was a further resemblance in that God named both before they were born (Genesis 17:19; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23). This alone should forever refute the doctrine that with God, there is nothing in a name.

Abraham spared not his beloved son, but surrendered him for a sacrifice in order to obey God (Genesis 22:1-12). All have sinned (Romans 3:23), and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Therefore, somebody had to die, or all mankind would have to die. No one but Jesus was qualified to die for man. God spared not His only

Continued On Page 4

The Divine Blueprint For The Home



Brad T. Bromling

"As goes the home, so goes the nation." The truth of this maxim can be recognized by Christian and non-Christian alike. After decades of decline, the "home" is beginning to receive an immense amount of attention. Working without the objective standard of

God's Word, however, many people have been trying to rebuild the home according to novel and aberrant paradigms. But, "... the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his

Isaac And Christ

Continued From Page 3

begotten son, but sent Him to die on the cross that man might be saved from sin (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 8:32).

Isaac was likely between twenty-five and thirty years of age when Abraham bound him to be sacrificed. He could have resisted his father, but instead he submitted (Genesis 22:9). As they were going to the place for the sacrifice, Isaac bore the wood that was to be used in the sacrifice (Genesis 22:6). Jesus was willing to lay down His life and be sacrificed for man's sins (John 10:17, 18; II Corinthians 5:21; 8:9; Luke 22:42). He also bore the cross on which He was to be crucified at Calvary (Golgotha) (John 19:17; Luke 23:26).

When the time came for Isaac to be slain, an angel of God called unto Abraham and said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad" (Genesis 22:9-13). A ram was offered as a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:13). Jesus was offered as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world (John 1:29; I Peter 1:18-22; Revelation 13:8). There was no substitute for Jesus. Instead, Jesus became a substitute and died for all man's sins (John 10:17, 18; Romans 6:23; I Peter 2:24; II Corinthians 5:21).

Isaac was returned to his father (Genesis 22:12; Hebrews 11:17-19). Jesus was resurrected from the dead, and He returned to His father. He was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, with glory and honor (Philippians 2:5-11; John 17:5; Daniel 7:13-14). David beautifully described the coronation of Jesus as follows:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory will come in. Who is the King of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; yea lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory will come in. Who is the King of glory? Jehovah of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psalm 24:7-10).

Therefore, Christ is now the Christian's King. He is reigning from heaven over His kingdom, the church, and man need not look for another kingdom.

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own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). If the home is to function properly, it must be built according to the divine pattern. The blueprint for the home was drawn by God and given to Adam many years ago in his garden paradise.

One Man, One Woman

The divine blueprint specifies that the home which pleases God begins with the joining together of one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4; Genesis 2:22). This plan excludes polygyny (a man with a plurality of wives), and polyandry (a woman with a plurality of husbands). God underscored this fact when He presented the woman to Adam and said: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Also excluded is the concept of homosexual marriage. The Creator did not present Adam with a choice between Eve or "Steve" -- He only made woman. Adam was not incomplete simply because he lacked human companionship; he lacked female human companionship. Further, the Word of God categorically condemns homosexual behavior (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26ff; I Corinthians 6:9, etc.).

One Flesh

Jesus based His teaching about the home upon the original pattern established by God. He said: "... 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? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:4-6). Thus, sexual relations are only authorized within marriage (see Proverbs 5:15-21).

If we hope to save our nation from collapse, we must first restore our homes to the standard of God's Word.

All deviations from this "one flesh" pattern are condemned: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). The Bible affirms that God "hates divorce" (Malachi 2:16). Yet, if the sacredness of marital love is violated in any act of fornication (all forms of sexual immorality), the innocent spouse is allowed to obtain a divorce and may marry another person (Matthew 19:9). There is no other reason for divorce approved by God.

Fellowship With God

The home which follows the God-given pattern is one which is in fellowship with God. Genesis 3:8 portrays the Creator as "walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Precisely what this entailed we can only conjecture (see John 1:18), but it seems that Adam was not unaccustomed to this kind of communion (how else can we account for his impulse to hide?). When Eve was tempted by the serpent, she repeated the divine injunction regarding the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:3). When

Cain was born, Eve credited God (Genesis 4:1). When Cain and Abel were of age, they approached God with offerings (Genesis 4:3). These facts imply that Adam and Eve had built into their home a reverence for -- and fellowship with -- God.

The home is man's primary center for religious and moral instruction. Hence the inspired dictate: "... fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). It is a tragedy of mammoth proportions that modern man has abdicated this role to the school and church. Both these institutions have their functions to perform, but God never assigned to them the work of the home.

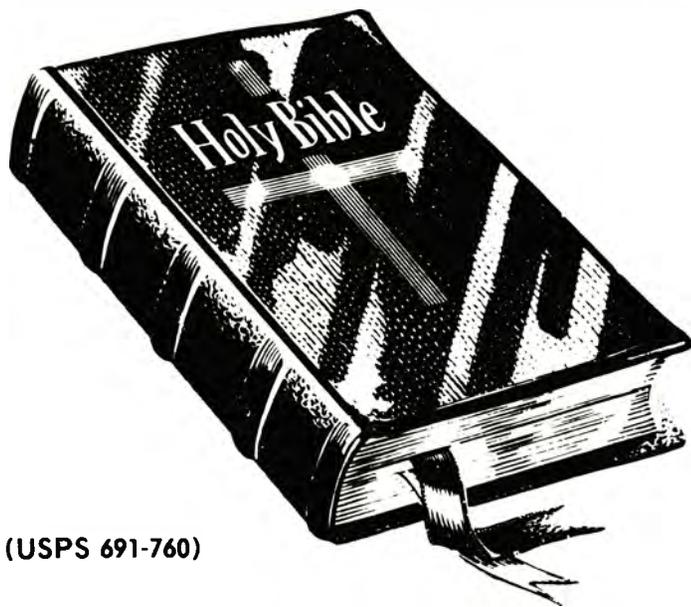
A wonderful example was set when Moses said this of religious instruction: "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Logically, parents who practice this are more likely to see their children convert to Christ than are those who expect the church to be the sole source of spiritual training.

If we hope to save our nation from collapse, we must first restore our homes to the standard of God's Word. Because of weak and dysfunctional homes, the church is hindered in her task. But, from solidly-built Christian homes, the church can draw a mighty army to overcome the forces of darkness and proclaim the Gospel of the triumphant Christ to the world.

--Via Reasoning from Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

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-Acts 26:25

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Has Archaeology Disproved Joshua's Conquest?



Brad T. Bromling

INTRODUCTION

Archaeology has long been viewed as a friend to the Bible student. This field of study has provided impressive knowledge about the ancient world which sheds light upon the biblical narratives. Passages of Scripture that seemed somewhat obscure to modern readers have been made clear by archaeological research. The spade has unearthed proof that the Bible's historical and geographical information is always correct. Indeed, decades of digging have resulted in the strengthening of faith for untold thousands of people.

A RECENT ALLEGATION

Sadly, liberal archaeologists are now interpreting the data in ways which contradict the Scriptures. A clear example of this appears in the March/April, 1992 issue of *Archaeology* magazine. The feature article "Who Were the Israelites?" asserts: "Recent discoveries suggest that the military conquest of the Promised Land as described in the Book of Joshua simply never happened" (p 4). The author, Neil A. Silberman, argues for a "rethinking" of Israelite history that flatly contradicts the book of Joshua. In his view, God's people were not a military power which conquered Canaan; instead, the Israelites were "hill-country farmers-turned-herdsmen" which "were able to establish a stable, alternative way of life on the desert fringe" of the Canaanite cities (p 30). As the Canaanite city-state system broke down, the Israelites began to occupy abandoned areas of Palestine, and eventually became established in their own right. Accordingly, Silberman recasts the account in Joshua in this light:

What seems almost certain, however, is that the story of the bloody conquest of the Land of Canaan as a unified military campaign led by a

single, divinely directed leader was woven together centuries later -- an anachronistic saga of triumph on the battle field, crafted and compiled by loyal court poets anxious to flatter the later Israelite and Judean kings (p 30).

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

Have archaeologists uncovered good reasons to "rethink" the Bible? Must we alter our view of inspiration to accommodate modern research? No! We must not forget that whereas the science of archaeology is man-made and imperfect, the Bible is from God and inerrant. Yet, even with this perspective in mind, the question persists: "Why does archaeology occasionally contradict the Scriptures?" The answer is twofold. First, the biblical text is often misunderstood or altogether ignored. This is true of Silberman's article. One of the arguments he urges against the historicity of the Israelite conquest is that Canaan was much different in the 13th Century B.C. that it is portrayed in the book of Joshua (p 24). But notice, the Scriptures fix the date of the conquest in the 15th century. This date is based upon I Kings 6:1: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign . . . that he began to build the house of Jehovah." Solomon's reign likely began in 970 B.C. All one must do is subtract four years from that date and add 480 years to arrive at the date for the exodus. Since the conquest occurred forty years later, this calculation yields the date of 1406 B.C. for Israel's entrance into Canaan -- not 1230-1220 B.C. (as liberal scholars allege).

We must not forget that whereas the science of archaeology is man-made and imperfect, the Bible is from God and inerrant.

Furthermore, Mr. Silberman contends: "The destruction of individual Canaanite cities occurred at various times over more than a century -- far longer than even the longest concerted military campaign" (p 24). This contention fails to take into account the fact that not all of Canaan was actually conquered under Joshua's leadership (Judges 2:11-3:6). Hundreds of years passed before the land was completely possessed by Israel.

Second, it is commonly assumed that the archaeologist's dates are objectively correct. In reality, the dating of ancient sites and events is often based upon inferences and supposition. In an article entitled "Redating the Exodus," John J. Bimson and David Livingstone argue convincingly that the destruction of Canaanite cities (which is usually dated in the 16th century B.C.) likely occurred about 1410-1400 B.C. (*Biblical Archaeology Review* September/October, 1987). If these authors are correct, the need to "rethink" the conquest story of Joshua disappears like morning fog from a Florida swamp.

CONCLUSION

It only makes good sense to calibrate the subjective dating scheme of archaeology by the objective standard of the Scriptures. When this is done, there is an obvious correlation between the fall of Canaanite cities and the military conquest of Joshua. Hence, it is actually Mr. Silberman's reconstruction that is the fictitious account of Israelite history! Regardless, however, true archaeology remains the Bible student's friend.

--Via Reasoning from Revelation, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Medical Article Suggests Christ Faked Death, Resurrection



David Wade

An article published recently in a British Medical Journal challenges one of the fundamental tenets of Christianity -- that Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected.

The article appearing in the Journal of the Royal College of Physicians was authored by Dr. Trevor Lloyd Davies, a

retired physician and former chief medical advisor to Britain's Department of Employment, and his theologian wife Margaret.

The article says those who do not accept the biblical account must consider the possibility that Jesus faked his death in a premeditated bid to survive crucifixion. The author suggests that Jesus may have undergone syncope -- loss of consciousness caused by a temporary deficiency of blood supply to the brain -- and is more likely to have been resuscitated than resurrected.

The article conjectures "whether the whole episode was planned by Jesus and his followers, possibly at Gethsemane, that death would be feigned so that early removal from the cross might be secured." Davies suggests that the flogging Jesus received before crucifixion led to his early collapse on the cross and that appearing dead, he was taken down much sooner than usual. "Oxygen supply to the brain remained minimal, but above a critical level, until the circulation was restored when he was taken down from the cross and laid on the ground. As Jesus showed signs of life, he was not placed in a tomb, but taken away and tended."

The article added: "Jesus' later appearances, whether real or supposed, are not compelling evidence for or against resurrection or resuscitation."

Let me assure you that the crass ignorance and unbelief of the above named "physician" and his "theologian" wife is certainly not typical of all knowledgeable people in the field of medicine or theology. Their "theory" is so far flung and preposterous it hardly merits attention.

The allegation is based entirely upon assumption, fabrication, and ignoring fact. It is certain this couple do not believe the resurrection account and will use any means (no matter how preposterous) to make their point.

It is an incredible charge that Jesus could "fake

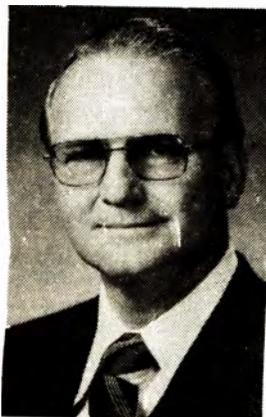
death" as a result of crucifixion. "Crucifixion was one of the most cruel and barbarous forms of death known to man. It was practiced, especially in times of war, by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Egyptians, and later by the Romans. So dreaded was it that even in the pre-Christian era, the cares and troubles of life were often compared to a cross" (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, 1963, p. 189).

If Jesus was in a state of "syncope -- loss of consciousness caused by a temporary deficiency of blood supply to the brain," then the spear thrust into his side would have provided the coup de grâce. The spear was thrust into his side AFTER the soldiers confirmed Jesus was already dead (John 19:32-34). In ancient times, a stab wound in the abdomen almost always meant certain death from loss of blood. The article makes no mention of the spear incident. Doubters and disputers have a tendency to ignore what they cannot answer.

The article alleges that Jesus "was not placed in a tomb, but taken away and tended." This charge ignores the fact that the enemies of Jesus were convinced of his death. They were some 2000 years closer to the event, yea there at the cross! They secured a day and night guard of soldiers at the tomb to make sure he didn't arise from the grave as he said he would (Matthew 27:64). After Jesus' resurrection, his enemies could put forth no argument, or present any evidence to discredit the event.

Finally, Davies claims, "Jesus' later appearances, whether real or supposed, are no compelling evidence for or against resurrection or resuscitation." In actuality, Davies' claims are the best "arguments" an unbeliever can make against the resurrection. However, we observe that Davies provides NO compelling argument or evidence to support his theory of resuscitation.

God's Time Table



Bobby Key

We often get in a hurry and try to run past our headlights. As one studies through the Old Testament, he is readily aware that God does not follow man's schedule. God called Abraham from his home in Ur of the Chaldees to be a pilgrim and stranger in the land of Palestine. Several years later God told him that his

descendants would be "a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years . . . In the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (Genesis 15:13-16).

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, was still living when his entire family, numbering only seventy people, went into Egypt. With the passing of time this little band had grown to approximately two million, and were greatly oppressed by a new Pharaoh. The time was near for God's promise to be fulfilled.

Four hundred years had come and gone, and Abraham's descendants were in a foreign land. They were slaves, but as far as getting out of Egypt at the end of God's time table, there was no hope at all.

If you had gone to Egypt say four months before the time had run out, you would have found life going on as usual. You would probably have decided, based on the evidence, that the Israelites would be in Egypt a very long time, perhaps forever. Egypt was at the height of her power, with no indication of immediate decline. Abraham's seed seemed hopelessly enslaved.

God placed Moses in charge of things, and the

Continued On Page 3

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We Could Improve Our Singing



R.W. Gray

That there is no biblical justification for a mechanical instrument or instruments by which one or a few in the assembly worships God there can be no doubt. In fact, a great number among the Conservative Christian Churches admit this up front.

That we are commanded to teach and admonish

"one another" in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in our assemblies is clear to all who are willing to take the time to investigate (Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16, 17).

Had it been in God's plan that an instrument -- or instruments-be employed in Christian worship we would not doubt that the best quality of such music of which we are capable of rendering would be required. A half-hearted, laxidassical performance in worship has never pleased the Lord (Malachi 1:10-13; 3:13, 14).

Let us not be deceived into thinking we may offer something less than our best in praise worship. We are commanded to sing and sing we must. And we are remiss in assuming that Jehovah is pleased with something less than the very best we are capable of rendering in song. That some have

greater musical abilities than others is understood; yet each is capable of doing his or her best.

Let us not be deceived into thinking we may offer something less than our best in praise worship. We are commanded to sing and sing we must. And we are remiss in assuming that Jehovah is pleased with something less than the very best we are capable of rendering in song.

The excuse in some quarters for introducing the instrument was poor singing. And while this in no way justifies the innovation this excuse, at least, can be removed by a demonstration that nothing is more pleasing to the ear than quality acappella music.

That we hear good congregational singing in most of our assemblies is admitted. Criticism by those who adhere to the view that an instrument is justified has all but ceased. But we can do even better. We could improve our singing. The first requirement is recognition of the need, and the second is desire to correct the deficiencies we observe. That desire must be translated into positive action if improvement is to be enjoyed.

Perhaps nothing contributes more to lack of enthusiasm in our song service than an overdose of the same songs week end and week out. Variety will not only increase interest in the song service it will afford opportunity to use "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."

Our congregations should allocate some time out of every month to song practice. This provides opportunity to learn new songs, to receive suggestions on how we might improve this activity, including, when possible, the practice of sight reading, and training of new song leaders.

Congregations would do well to provide professional training to those men who will lead singing. When this is neither practical or possible leaders should be encouraged to seek advice and/or help from experienced men in this field. We need to recognize the importance of a good leader if we would have good singing.

Another way we might improve the quality of our singing is to encourage those of the same voice part to sit in close promixity. Our voice range will increase noticeably, for example, if we as bass singers we sit near others who sing bass. The same is true of the other voice parts.

Song leaders should be encouraged to select the songs well in advance of the service time. It is not conducive to better singing when we observe the selection getting under way five or ten minutes prior to the time our praise is to begin.

When time for the service arrives let the leader come before the congregation with a lively step, a smile on his face, and the number (name of the

song if required) on his lips. Let him speak loudly and distinctly, observing the audience as if he expects participation on their part.

Let the singers lift their books, their heads, and their voices. Practice beginning together, not joining in a sentence or two into the song. Let the leader and the singers maintain the tempo of the song as it began. It is not good to begin as a house on fire only to end the song as a fire going out.

A number of concerned brethren have expressed disappointment that we hear of so very few who ever schedule a singing school. Some of the professional music teachers themselves are reluctant to suggest that our brotherhood correct this lack for fear of appearing self serving. But we need to be encouraged to schedule such schools in our congregations. When the cost may seem prohibitive several churches in a geographical area may consider a school in a centrally located area where the cost may be shared.

--563 McGukin Rd., Bremen, GA 30110.

Singing Glorifies God And Edifies Man

Kenneth McClain

We sing the song "This world is not my home, I'm just passing through." This old song expresses a great Biblical truth. This world is not the home for the Christian. The home for the Christian is on high. As Christians we must remember that we are only pilgrims and sojourners on the earth.

Someone said that we cannot be any happier than when we have a melody in our hearts and a song on our lips. Think about the great joy, fellowship, and closeness that Christians have when they sing together.

Would not the soul be dull, the heart sad and the life empty if we could not sing songs of joy? There are times when man needs to sing songs of praise, adoration and gratitude unto God. When Paul and Silas had their feet tied fast in stocks, they "prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them." It would not be uncommon for those who have great faith in Christ like Paul and Silas and under like circumstances, to break forth in song. Such a song as "There's within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low, Fear not I am with thee, Peace, be still, In all of life's ebb and flow." Paul said, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). In song we teach those about us that we have the peace that passes understanding.

What a great privilege to worship God. When we worship God in the way He would have us to worship Him, He is glorified and we are edified.

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God's Time Table

Continued From Page 2

next few months brought dramatic changes. The Nile River was turned to blood, homes of the Egyptians were filled with frogs, their bodies were covered with lice. Locusts destroyed their crops, their cattle died of disease, and finally the life of each firstborn son was snuffed out. Pharoah's great army had been drowned in the depths of the sea, and the Israelites were free and safe on the other side.

God took the most powerful nation in the world, shook it to its core, hurled it to its knees, trampled it in the dust, and delivered his people on the very day he had promised. He did all of this in four months or maybe less.

Never make the mistake of trying to outguess God. He will do things in His own way and at his own time.

"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the host of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:40, 41).

Never make the mistake of trying to outguess God. He will do things in His own way and at his own time.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.

Joseph, A Picture Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

There are but few records in the Bible that portray divine providence more powerfully than the records of Joseph and Jesus. God overruled in many ways to save Israel from the famine, and he also overruled when Jesus came into the world and was rejected by His own people (John 1:11, 12). God overruled when the Jews rejected Jesus, and He brought salvation to all mankind. The resemblance between Joseph and Jesus is so striking that if Joseph is not a type of Christ, at least we have a picture of Christ when we compared the two.

Joseph's brothers were envious of him because Jacob loved Joseph more than he did his other children and made him a coat of many colors. They hated Joseph the more because of his dreams (Genesis 37:3-11). Divine providence overruled the envy of Joseph's brethren (Genesis 45:5; 50:15-21). Divine providence overruled the envy which the Jews had of Jesus (Matthew 27:18). Jesus laid down His life and paid the penalty of death to save mankind from sin (John 10:17, 18; Romans 6:23).

Joseph was Jacob's son by his beloved wife, Rachel. Also because Joseph was the son of his old age, Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children (Genesis 33:2; 37:3). Joseph was sent on a mission of mercy, but his brethren rejected him because of envy (Genesis 37:3-11, 13-30). Jesus, God's only begotten son, was sent on a mission of mercy. He was sent to save the world (John 1:29; 3:16, 17; Luke 19:10; I John 4:14). Jesus was rejected by His own people (John 1:11, 12; Zechariah 13:6).

When Joseph found his brethren in Dothan, they stripped him of his coat of many colors, cast him into a pit, and then sold him to a band of

Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:23-28). Jesus was betrayed (sold) for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15; 27:3-5). Jesus was stripped of His garments, and lots were cast for His coat (Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:23, 24). The parting of the garments and the casting of lots for the coat of Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of David (Psalm 22:18).

Joseph's brethren thought they had gotten rid of Joseph when they sold him (Genesis 37:28). However, his brethren had to face Joseph again when the famine came and they had to go to Egypt to buy grain (Genesis chapters 42, 43, 44). The enemies of Jesus thought they had gotten rid of Jesus when they had Him crucified (Isaiah 53:10-12; Mark 15:13, 14, 29-31). As Joseph's brethren had to face him in Egypt, so did the enemies of Jesus have to face Him after His resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-8).

Joseph's brethren killed a goat, took Joseph's coat of many colors and dipped it in the goat's blood, and brought the coat to their father (Genesis 37:31-34). They, therefore, lied about what became of Joseph. The enemies of Jesus lied about the resurrection of Jesus. They paid the soldiers money to bear false witness that while they slept, His disciples came and stole the body of Jesus (Matthew 28:11-15). If they had been asleep, they would not have known what happened to Jesus. The truth is, they knew that Jesus arose from the dead, but they lied about it, as did the brethren of Joseph.

Another striking resemblance between Joseph

Making Others Look Good



W. T. Allison

Bear Bryant knew how to get the best out of his people. He explained his secret this way: "I'm just a plowhand from Arkansas, but I've learned how to hold a team together, how to lift some men up, how to calm others

down, until finally, as a team, we've got one heartbeat. There are just three things I would say. If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, we did it. If anything goes real good, you did it. That is all it really takes to get people to win football games for you."

Only a really great person knows how to take blame and how to give credit. Sometimes it means being criticized for things that are not entirely your fault. At other times it means watching from the sidelines as others are praised for things you are responsible for. It is tough to take someone else's lumps; it is even tougher to watch someone else take your bows.

Yet, is not that at least a part of what Christianity is all about -- making others look good while keeping your own humility intact?

Paul described Christian love in this way, "IT IS NOT RUDE, IT IS NOT SELF-SEEKING, IT IS NO EASILY ANGERED, IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS . . . IT ALWAYS PROTECTS, ALWAYS TRUSTS, ALWAYS

and Jesus is that both of them endured temptation. Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph to commit adultery with her, but Joseph remained pure (Genesis 39:7-12). Jesus was also tempted, but did no sin (Matthew 4:1-11; I Peter 2:22). He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Joseph became the ruler in Egypt, and he forgave his brethren and invited them to come to Egypt, lest they come to poverty and die of starvation because of the famine (Genesis 45:11; 50:20). Joseph gave them Goshen, the best of the land (Genesis 45:1-15; 50:15-21). Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13, 14). He became ruler of heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus has invited all men to come to Him, and He offers them a full pardon and forgiveness of sins upon the basis of faith and obedience (Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 16:15, 16; Hebrews 5:9). Jesus has also prepared an eternal home for all men -- a home where God shall wipe away all tears (John 14:1-4; Hebrews 2:9; Revelation 21:4). If the family of Joseph had not accepted his offer to move to Egypt, they would not have been saved from famine. All men must accept the Savior's invitation and come to Him in obedience in order to be saved from their sins and enjoy the eternal home in heaven which He has prepared for all the faithful.

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Singing Glorifies God And Edifies Man

Continued From Page 3

Let us never forget that singing edifies, teachers and admonishes those who hear.

David said, ". . . O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness" (Psalm 51:14). God does hear the songs of His children and such songs are a delight to Him. Someone said, "The more one sings, the more one will sing." Should we not sing about the great salvation that we have in Christ? I have not found in the Bible where it says that we must carry a tune, but I do read that we are 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 your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

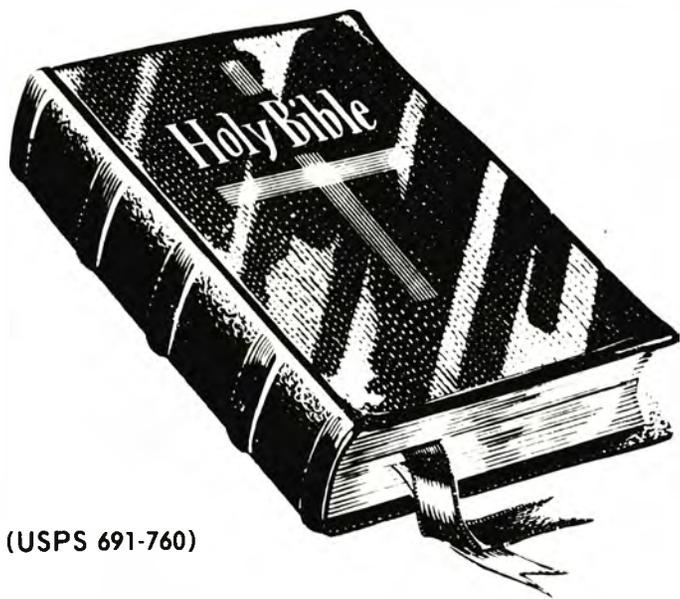
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HOPES, ALWAYS PERSERVERES" (I Corinthians 13:5, 7). Peter added his own exhortation, "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sin" (I Peter 4:8).

Only a really great person knows how to take blame and how to give credit. Sometimes it means being criticized for things that are not entirely your fault. At other times it means watching from the sidelines as others are praised for things you are responsible for. It is tough to take someone else's lumps; it is even tougher to watch someone else take your bows.

Making others look good -- it is not just good public relations, it is a matter of Christian living AND Christian loving.

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Words of Truth

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

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26:25

VOLUME 28

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"How Beautiful Heaven Must Be!"



Dan Winkler

"How beautiful heaven must be, Sweet home of the happy and free; Fair haven of rest for the weary, How beautiful heaven must be."

In Revelation 21:1-8, we find at least three reasons why heaven is such a wonderful place.

I. First. It Is A Place Of Untold "Gladness" And Joy (v. 1).

At best, our lives are overcast with sorrow (Job 5:7; 14:1; II Corinthians 5:4). How frequently we have been led to echo the words of David, "My tears have been my food day and night . . . why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?" (Psalm 42:3, 5). But our text sets before us three remarkable changes that depict heaven as a place -- in contrast -- of unspeakable joy.

(1) "new heaven and new earth." This same phrase is used three times elsewhere in scripture, in connection with **joy** (Isaiah 65:17-20), **worship** (Isaiah 66:22-24), and **righteousness** (II Peter 3:13). Thus, a use of this phrase brings to mind the idea of heaven being a place of joy and worship where nothing but righteousness abounds!

(2) "the first heaven and the first earth are passed away." Remember, the combination of these terms "heaven and earth" impressed on the Jews' mind the concept of a universe (Cf. Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11). Thus, reference is to the devastation and desolation of our universe. Are we not warned that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10)? By the way, this second phrase teaches us that we must not understand the first phrase within the framework of premillennial overtones. A new heaven and a new earth will not consist of the old

heaven and old earth being altered. Indeed, when Jesus come we will witness the constellation of stars and compilation of some two and a half billion galaxies heave and belch the greatest death cry ever only to dissolve by fervent heat into the oblivion of non-existence.

(3) "the sea is no more." Such is hard to imagine. Recently I returned from the Carribean where one of our elders and I engaged in campaign work. We were overwhelmed by the mass and majesty of the Atlantic Ocean and the Carribean Sea (Cf. Psalm 33:6-9). Flying across such at night was as if the hand of God had spread a black cape over the world of civilization, a "blackness of darkness" prevailed because there was nothing below but water. Looking across the same in the light of day you saw wind drive topwater against undercurrents, only to whitecap in the middle of the sea. It is hard not to be awed and humbled by the multi-shades of blue, making their way to a shore of sun-baked, blackened sand. You scan the horizon, and the blue of the sea joined hands with the blue of the sky as if they became one. But, the time will come when . . . the sea shall be no more!

Great changes await. When Jesus returns this universe will be destroyed and with other faithful brethren we will step into a world of joy, worship, and righteousness! Heaven is a place of untold "gladness" and joy.

II. Second. It Is A Place Of Unspeakable "Glory" (v. 2, 3, 9ff)

"Sing to me of heaven, let me fondly dream, of its golden glory, of its pearly gleam." Our text sets the glory of heaven before us by the use of three beautiful descriptions.

(1) ". . . a bride adorned for her husband. . . " NOTE: reference is made to heaven as "a bride," not the chambermaids, waiting and longing for their day. Even more, it is described as "a bride adorned and made ready." The day she has envisioned from the imaginations of her childhood has now arrived. It is the day she finally opens her hopechest and drinks deeply from the pleasures of

her dreams! She is now a bride dressed and made ready to walk down the aisle and fasten her eyes on one man amidst the mass of humanity. It is this beautiful scene that has been used to describe heaven as a place made ready for the righteous!

(2) "the tabernacle of God." Cradling the Old Testament ark of the covenant within its "holy of holies," the tabernacle of God symbolized the very presence and glory of God. Too, a careful study will reveal the tabernacle to be a tent of much beauty (study Exodus 26)! Yet, again, it is this place of beauty, accompanied by the presence of God, that is used to describe the glory of heaven.

(3) "the holy city, coming down, from God." This city is said to have had three things [American Standard version]: the glory of God, a wall great and high, and twelve gates. Having specified these three items, John focused on each in detail -- in reverse order. First, the twelve gates had twelve special doormen, angels of God. Too, each gate carried with it the name of a tribe of Israel. Even more, each gate was made of pearl and was never closed. Yea, they were made of a pearl, not from some oyster in the heart of the sea, but a pearl handcrafted and carved by the fingers of God! Second, this city's great wall was said to have had twelve foundations, each two hundred and fifteen feet high. Each foundation also bore a name, one of the apostles. Even more, twelve stones of multi-splendored beauty, multi-faceted in color, were said to adorn these foundations. Finally, the glory of this city was the glory of God in that it had no need for the sun nor the moon because the glory of God and the Lamb did lighten it!

These beautiful descriptions remind us of the thrill we have in singing those beautiful lyrics, "I've got a home in glory-land that outshines the sun!"

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Words Of Truth

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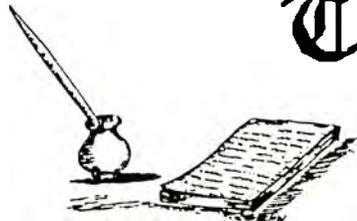
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—Acts 26:25*

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Four Views Of Death



David Wade

Death is an ever-present reality. We may deny our mortality and we may "run" from death. However, eventually, every person must face his appointment with death. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). They are blessed or happy. "Blessed" is the same word Jesus used to introduce the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Jesus said of Lazarus that "he is comforted" (Luke 16:25). The faithful Christian is able to enjoy an eternal rest from all labor, pain, sickness and death (Revelation 21:14).

In addition, the influence of the faithful Christian lives beyond his earthly pilgrimage to influence others for good. The faithful example of righteous Abel speaks eloquently to us even to this day (Hebrews 11:4).

Consider the view of death Paul urges for every faithful saint this side of eternity. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Our lives must be centered in Christ, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Further, Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:23-24). The faithful Christian enjoys all spiritual blessings in Christ now (Ephesians 1:3). One can look forward to the "gain" that is "far better" when this earthly life is over.

Consider the view of death held by the unredeemed when they suddenly discover they have squandered their last opportunity to serve God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:3). When that day comes the falling rocks and mountains cannot hide the unredeemed from the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16). They will hear the fateful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

What is your view concerning death?

Do We Believe Without Reason?



Many who knew some things about Jesus, but knew to little, or were too biased to confess the truth perceived, held wrong and unfounded views regarding his identity. They variously affirmed, "He is John, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets" (Matthew 16:13, 14).

Jesus challenged his apostles, "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). When Peter expressed his conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Jesus pronounced a beatitude upon him, with this added commendation, "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:16, 17).

When one possessed of a devil, blind, and dumb was healed instantly by Jesus in the presence of the people, Matthew says they "were amazed, and said, 'Is not this the son of David?'" (Matthew 12:22-23). Did they ask the right question? Yes. Was their reasoning correct? Obviously.

But we need to probe a little further into these two accounts. Peter, as well as the people of Matthew twelve, weighed the evidence presented them, and from this evidence reached a conclusion. Others, in the context of Matthew twelve, seeing the same miracle that caused many to confess Jesus as the son of David, concluded that his miracles proved to be Beelzebub, the prince of devils (Matthew 12:22-27).

Who, in the foregoing accounts, reasoned

People view death in different ways. For some, death is their greatest fear. To others, death is the doorway to their greatest hope. How do you view death? Let us be impressed with four views of death we find in the Scriptures.

First, consider God's feelings toward the death of his saints. David said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). The death of his saints is precious to God, because it is costly. It cost the blood of Jesus on the cross for our sins. Christians are redeemed by the "precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:19).

Notice also that the precious death of the saint is "in the sight of the Lord." Speaking of the "valley of the shadow of death," David exclaimed, "thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4). When Lazarus died, his spirit was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). When a faithful Christian dies, he does so in the attentive presence of our loving God. The death of a saint is precious in God's sight.

Consider the view of death held by the faithful departed Christian. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and

What Must I Do To Be Lost?



Bobby Key

Without doubt, the greatest question ever asked is: "What Must I do to Be Saved?" Three times this question is addressed in the book of Acts, first by the people on Pentecost -- Acts 2:37, Next by Saul -- Acts 9:6, then by the Philippian Jailer -- Acts 16:30.

Since many people can't seem to be persuaded to obey the gospel of Christ and be saved, perhaps they would be more interested in the question, "What Must I Do To Be

Lost?"

The answer to our question is quite simple. Just Don't Do Anything! In Hebrews 2:3 we are warned that there is no escape for those who neglect the great salvation. "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Jesus will tell the lost on the day of judgment, "Ye did it not . . . depart from me." Inaction never righted a sin or saved a soul. Some reason that they refrain from getting drunk, don't curse and remain faithful to their marriage vows, therefore they deserve to go to heaven. This is like adding a column of zeros and still have nothing but a zero for the sum total. Morality is necessary but

"How Beautiful Heaven Must Be!"

Continued From Page 1

III. Finally, It Is A Place Where "God" Lives (v. 3-5)

According to the Bible, our universe is the easy-chair of God and the earth is nothing more than his footstool (Isaiah 66:1, 2). "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain" him (I Kings 8:27)! Still, there is a place that God chooses to call home, that place being heaven itself (Deuteronomy 26:15; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Cf. Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 2:7).

Our context reveals three promises relative to God's presence.

(1) "... he shall dwell with them..." Such terminology reminds us of God's promise to Israel: "If you walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain . . . I will give peace . . . I will have respect unto you . . . and I will set my tabernacle among you . . . and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:3-11).

(2) "... God himself shall be with them..." Not simply an angel of God, though that would be something wonderful. Not an ambassador of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, though that would be something spectacular. Rather, God has promised that he himself will be with us!

(3) "... he shall wipe away every tear..." Such will be done by the abolition of that which causes tears.

There will be no more "death." No more bedside vigils, anxious moments, and mixed feelings of confusion [i.e. "I hate to see him suffer, but I hate to say goodbye."].

There will be no more "mourning." No more uncontrollable sobs and sorrow. No more hours of visitation, nights of lonely vexation, no more days of bitter-sweet memories.

There will be no more "crying." No more tear-stained pillows of disappointment. No more blood-shot eyes of despair and discouragement. No more fatigue or feeling washed out by affliction and sorrow.

There will be no more "pain." No more open wounds. No more surgeries. No more children, whimpering in their efforts to understand the "whys and wherefores" of injury. No more teenagers struggling with their sense of identity and direction, coping with the rejection of their peers. No more single-parents fighting with their inner-self in the face of life's disappointments. No more disloyalty, broken homes, divorce. No more broken hearts and shattered lives. Yea, "the first things are passed away."

Remember the promise of Jesus: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also" (John 14:3)? What joy it will be to walk hand in hand with Jesus, to bow in reverence and look into the very eyes of God, only to feel the security of his love and the warmth of his glory!

Conclusion

Jesus said through John, "These words are faithful and true" (v. 5). What assurance! We can go to the bank over what the Bible says not only about heaven but any other subject!

"How beautiful heaven must be, Sweet home of the happy and free; Fair haven of rest for the weary, How beautiful heaven must be."

That being true, it is interesting to see that our context is brought to a close by revealing three classes of people in connection with heaven (v. 6-8): "contrite," those who thirst for the water of life

Do We Believe Without Reason?

Continued From Page 2

correctly? It is obvious that their minds were engaged. They saw, they reflected, and they reached a conclusion. Peter, his fellow apostles, as recorded in Matthew sixteen, and a goodly number as recorded in Matthew twelve, reached a conclusion that was right. Others, as recorded in both chapters herein mentioned, reached false conclusions. What saith the scriptures? How readest thou? Do you propose that both conclusions were valid, or at least acceptable unto God?

Those who deride us for embracing a hermeneutic that involves deductive reasoning in reaching valid conclusions would be in difficult straits, or so it would seem, to commend the conclusion reached by some that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, or to cast aspersions upon those who reached an opposite conclusion.

If using our reasoning faculties is suspect as a viable means of reaching valid conclusions, then one must admit that to believe, from the evidence presented, that Jesus is the Christ of God, is also suspect. Surely, surely, brethren will awaken before it is too late. Faith is itself the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). And faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). If we are deprived of the privilege -- yea the obligation -- of using our reasoning faculties in arriving at biblical truths we are truly adrift without chart or compass.

It is a sad day in Zion when "reason" is scoffed at by those who propose to be our teachers.

Although some might question the idea, it is to be assumed that those who have decided we are remiss to reason from the general to the particular, reached that conclusion by examining or observing certain religious matters, and that their "minds" were in some manner engaged. Would it not be the inescapable inevitability that we should, as per

and long for a change in their lives; the "conquerors," those who overcome; and the "condemned," whose part will "be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

As we reflect on the untold gladness, the unspeakable glory of this place God calls home, let's ask ourselves, "Into which of these three categories of people do I belong?"

How beautiful heaven must be, sweet home of the happy and free; fair heaven of rest for the weary, how beautiful heaven must be!

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their mode of reasoning (?), question their presumptions, seeing that they used their minds to reach their conclusions? Ah, how unequal are the legs of the lame.

Affirmative, declarative statements, and commands of the Bible as much demand we use our minds to understand as do examples and implications. We understand, do we not, that we are not commanded to "abide in a ship" with Paul to save our lives. But this is a command found in the New Testament (Acts 27:31). Yes, we must engage our minds to determine if the evidence warrants the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ. We must use our minds to determine whether a command, an example, or a possible inference applies to my life today. It is a sad day in Zion when "reason" is scoffed at by those who propose to be our teachers.

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Jesus, Our Example



W. A. Holley

"For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

God calls sinners through the power of the gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). This call is not a mysterious, better felt than told, experience of grace, as is argued by some. For example,

Paul's story of conversion is told three times in the book of Acts (Acts 9:22; 26). It is evident that God thought that Paul's conversion could and should be understood by ordinary people (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). We do not need the clergy to explain these matters to us, for these fellows need someone to teach them a few things.

But Jesus is our example. What is an example? The Greek word (hupogrammos) means "to write under, to trace letters for copying scholars . . . a writing-copy, an example. . . ." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, p. 213). Thus Jesus became a wonderful example for all believers, "that we should walk in his steps." Other words teaching somewhat the same lesson are "form," "pattern," "manner," and "fashion" (Romans 6:17; II Timothy 1:13; I Timothy 1:16; I Corinthians 7:31; Acts 23:25; Titus 2:7; Hebrews 8:5).

In what areas is Jesus Christ our example? We shall note---

(1) "I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," said Jesus (John 6:38). It should be the will of

every responsible human being of earth to do the will of God as it applies to him (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46). True happiness lies at the end of life's struggles for all who do the will of God. Jesus did the will of God even though it cost him his life, and so must we (Matthew 26:47-50; Mark 14:46; Luke 22:47; Revelation 2:10; 2:7).

(2) Jesus was honorable and upright in all his confrontations with the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 23:13; Matthew 16:1, 22:23; Matthew 5:20). He was never deceitful or hateful or unkind in his opposition to them. How wonderful it is for one who can disagree without being disagreeable! It is not so much what we say, but the tone of our voice that makes the difference. One old man who could not read had a rebellious son who ran away from home. A few days later, the old man received a letter from his son asking for money. He took the letter to a man whose voice was harsh and gruff who read the letter for him. The father said, "I'll not send him a dime, he can't talk that way to me." After some delay, he took the same letter to an old woman whose voice was warm, kind, and gentle. After hearing the letter read again, the old man said, "Now he is talking right to his father, I'll send him the money."

(3) Jesus was well organized and in complete control of his life. He never flew off in all directions at one time. Whatever the situation, Jesus was in control. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). The art of self-control is taught in the Bible (I Corinthians 7:5; Matthew 23:25; II Timothy 3:3; II Peter 1:5-11). True Christians, control the tongue, the appetite, the mind, even all their thoughts (II Corinthians 10:3-6; Philippians 4:7).

(4) Jesus demonstrated for the human family what the word sacrifice really is. He gave up

heaven and came down to a world cursed by sin, where he had no place to live (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). But Jesus went to the cross, there he emptied himself, that His great sacrifice for the sins of men might be made (Philippians 2:5-11; II Corinthians 8:9). Since Jesus Christ has done so much for us, should we not sacrifice a liberal portion of our money, talent, and time for the promotion of His Cause? (I Corinthians 16:1-2; Matthew 25:14-30; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5). Hence, we must make the most of every opportunity, turning each to the best advantage since none can be recalled if missed. Truly, our opportunities to do good are our talents. Jesus "went about doing good," and so should we (Acts 10:38).

(5) When friends turned against Him, Jesus never quit. Peter denied him three times, but, though disappointed, Jesus did not throw up his hands and quit. Although he was deserted by his disciples, he remained on course (Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; John 18:19-27). When Judas betrayed Him, Jesus did not lose his patience and calm, but marched onward toward the cross (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18, Acts 1). How often have elders, deacons, and preachers seen Christians(?) become upset at other member's conduct and cease to attend the various services of the church? Maybe there is a selfish streak here . . . they must have their way or else. This writer has known members who were looking for a church, which they can never find -- A perfect church with perfect elders, deacons, preachers. Dear Reader, if you ever find such a congregation, please let me know.

Christian discipleship is character-building, but shame awaits him who fails to finish the course (II Timothy 4:6-8).

(6) Jesus knew that the Old Testament would cease and that the New Testament would be inaugurated (John 1:17). He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17-18). In Matthew 26:28, Jesus anticipates the New Testament when he instituted the Lord's supper. The Old Testament ended when Jesus died upon the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). Our Lord divided the Old Testament into three parts: "The law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms," and said that all things concerning himself had been fulfilled (Luke 24:47-49). Just as Jesus fulfilled all things concerning himself in the Scriptures, we, today, must fulfill all the Scriptures that apply to us (Cf. Matthew 26:54). Many honest, sincere denominational people have never been able to understand the Scriptures because they fail to rightly divide it (II Timothy 2:15). We live under the New Testament; we do not live under the Old Testament.

(7) Jesus finished the work which he came to earth to accomplish. "I glorified thee on earth, having finished that which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). While suspended upon the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Jesus never left his tasks undone. For the children of God this principle is abundantly illustrated in Luke 14:28-30. It is not enough to begin a worthy endeavor, but this endeavor must be finished. Christian discipleship is character-building, but shame awaits him who fails to finish the course (II Timothy 4:6-8). Dear Readers, let Jesus Christ be your example in all that you do -- heaven will surely be your eternal home.

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

What Must I Do To Be Lost?

Continued From Page 2

morality without Christ won't save (John 15:4).

If you are determined to be lost, Reject Christ. To do this one does not need to be an atheist or talk ugly of Him. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me." The person who will not respond to His invitation and take his stand for Jesus has rejected Him. Christ is man's one and only hope. He is the only mediator between God and man. He alone can save. Ignore Christ and you are lost!

All who will not believe and obey the gospel of Christ are lost. The Lord will return "in flaming fire to take vengeance on all that know not God and those who will no obey the Gospel" (II Thessalonians 1:8). God has no other power to save you other than the sweet, redemptive story of love, found in the Gospel.

The once populous city of Jerusalem became a ghost town, the happy wife a widow, the queen a slave-girl, and her beauty had departed from her. Her so-called friends disclaimed all alliance and were as taunting captors gloating over her downfall. The Holy One no longer dwelt in Jerusalem. Tears came easily because their situation was so hopeless. There was none to comfort them, and her enemies heard of her trouble and were glad (Lamentations 1:21). Her children were starving in the streets; women actually ate their own children (Lamentations 2:11,

12, 19, 20; 4:10). The wrath of God had been poured out upon an ungodly people.

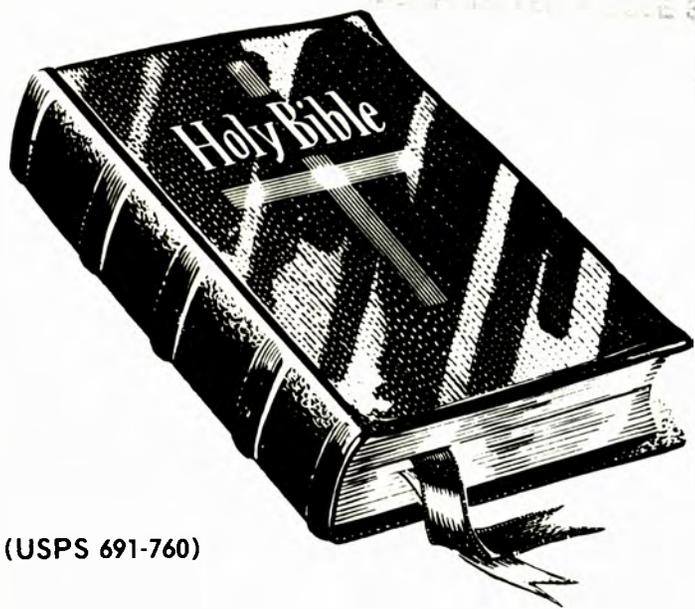
Religious compromise causes moral decay. The humbling of self under the chastening hand of God brings relief. When will we ever learn that our help is only in the Lord? Sin wrecks lives, homes, churches, and nations.

When will we ever learn that our help is only in the Lord? Sin wrecks lives, homes, churches, and nations.

I don't know how long it will take for our apostasy to become complete, nor how long God's patience will endure. The majority of earth's people know not God, and will not seek after Him nor look to Him for salvation. People today actually withstand God and blaspheme His holy name. Let us "search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord . . . we have transgressed and have rebelled" (Lamentations 3:40-42).

Yes, if you have your mind made up to be lost, this is all that is required: don't do anything, reject Christ, and refuse to obey the gospel.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK 74354.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but my words are of truth and soberness."

the

5:25

VOLUME 28

MAY 1, 1992

NUMBER 18

Religious Sinners



Bobby Key

It is a difficult truth to accept, but one may be religious and still be a sinner. Solomon saw the wicked buried. These wicked people had "come and gone from the place of the holy" (Ecclesiastes 8:10). Today they would be called "regular churchgoers."

In spite of this fact, they were still wicked! Jesus saw people in the judgment calling, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). Yes, religious people will be turned away at the judgment.

The most prominent and influential religious sect of Jesus' day did not have God's approval. The Pharisees had made a pledge to set apart all sacred tithes, to refrain from eating anything which had been tithed, and to observe all laws and conditions concerning purity in food and family relationships. To them religion was a burden consisting of thousands of petty rules and regulations. Their whole idea of religion consisted of outward appearances.

These religious sinners were rebuked by John the Baptist and by our Lord. They would say and do not -- they preached much, but practiced little. Their works were done to be seen of men. They loved the pre-eminence, and shut up the kingdom against men, not going in themselves and not allowing others to enter. They often made long prayers, standing on street corners. They frequently talked widows and poor people into letting them manage their property for them, thus, devouring widow's houses. They would cross land and sea to make one proselyte; yet, their efforts

only made the convert worse. Jesus said, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23).

It is interesting to note that the Pharisees came into existence about 160 B.C., but never became a really large group of people. Judah's population was well over one-half million, but the sect of the Pharisees numbered as little as two thousand, and as many as six thousand. One can only wonder how such a minority could have so great an impact.

Being religious is not enough. External religion has always been easier than internal religion. It is far easier to abstain from certain foods, and to wash the hands in a certain way than it is to forgive the unlovely and the unlovable, and to help the needy at the cost of one's own time, money, comfort and ease.

Kevin Ballard observed three reasons for the Pharisees remaining so few in number. (1) The group was small because of their rigid entrance requirements. In order for a person to apply, he had to be recommended by a member of the Pharisaic order. After that recommendation, and an extensive background check, the applicant was questioned by three members of the sect, and only after being approved by all these methods would a person be allowed to take the oath to become a Pharisee. (2) The group was so small because of their internal control system. Once a person was a Pharisee, he was never allowed to give tithes or

prepare food unless someone else of the Pharisaic order was present to assist and observe. This was done in order that discipline could be maintained. When a person became a Pharisee, his entire household became Pharisees and were bound by the rules of the sect. The head of the household was responsible for the conduct of all the family, including servants and slaves. (3) They remained small because of their strict system of discipline among their members. If one member of the order was considered suspect of not following the rules of the order, he was brought before a council. If charges were proven, the member was expelled.

Being religious is not enough. External religion has always been easier than internal religion. It is far easier to abstain from certain foods, and to wash the hands in a certain way than it is to forgive the unlovely and the unlovable, and to help the needy at the cost of one's own time, money, comfort and ease. It is easier to attend the church service than it is to maintain the right spirit while there. External observances are often misleading. We see that man does, but we cannot know why he does it. We examine the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

This is the reason we continue to harp on attitude. Attitude determines action -- it is just that simple. To change a man, you must first change his heart, his thinking. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

It is possible to attend church every time the door opens, and never really worship. We can honor the Lord with our lips, and our heart be far from Him. We can go through the motions -- meet the letter of the law -- yet fail to worship in spirit. Thoughts are as important as deeds; the motive is as important as the act. To be what we ought to be we

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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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You Get What You Expect



Dalton Key

The Bereans were not a gullible folk. They listened with care and discernment as Paul preached to them, measuring his message alongside the infallible yardstick of God's word. According to Luke, the inspired historian of the first century church, the Bereans "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. Therefore many of them believed" (Acts 17:11, 12). They did not confuse their opinion of the messenger with the truthfulness of the message. No, these listeners were not gullible.

But neither were they stubbornly skeptical. Their hearts were receptive and their minds were open. They "received the word with all readiness of mind." In this respect, the noble Bereans shared a common bond with the obedient Pentecostians of Acts 2:41, who "gladly received" the gospel preached by Peter. They were similar in heart to the Corinthians who received Paul's message of the gospel and stood therein (I Corinthians 15:1). They likewise had much in common with the brethren at Thessalonica, to whom Paul wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, 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

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The Editor's Pen

David Wade

Proof Texts Used By Modern Day "Healers"



David Wade

If other areas of the country are like our area, then they too are "blessed" with an abundance of religious hucksters who claim power to speak in tongues and perform miracles of healing. They, of all people, know they are fakes and do not duplicate the miracles of the First Century. It is appropriate to note some of their proof-texts and expose their errors.

1) "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). It is argued from this verse that atonement includes healing of the body. Even a casual reading of the immediate context reveals that healing of the soul is what is under consideration (v. 6). Jesus healed numerous afflicted persons without ever dying. His death on the cross was necessary in order to heal sin-sick souls. Jesus died for our sins, not our sicknesses (I Corinthians 15:3).

If healing of the body is also promised in Isaiah 53:5, then a person who receives forgiveness should expect healing of any and all physical problems. However, such was not the case even when the true miracles were evident in the First Century. Paul had a thorn in the flesh which the Lord would not remove (II Corinthians 12:8-9). Timothy had a stomach ailment (I Timothy 5:23). Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick (II Timothy 4:20). If divine healing were a part of the atonement, no Christian should ever suffer disease or die. However, we know that faithful Christians suffer disease and die just as the wicked do.

2) "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). It is argued that Christ is the same today and since he miraculously healed in the First Century, he must do the same today. This is simply a perversion of what the text is saying. For example, "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Does God continue to make man in this way? God rained "bread from heaven" (Exodus 16:4). Does he feed us with manna today? Hebrews 13:8 tells us of the eternal nature of Christ. It implies that Jesus is same in character but it does not imply he is same in method. That

which proves too much proves nothing.

3) "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

These signs followed believers but there is no proof they followed all believers or that they follow believers today. The signs did not follow believers in Samaria for a period of time. It was necessary for the apostles Peter and John to lay hands on them to impart the gifts (Acts 8:18). Philip performed miracles but could not impart the gifts (Acts 8:6).

The purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

When the word of God was confirmed, the signs were to halt (I Corinthians 13:8).

No person has been miraculously healed and not one dead person has been raised to life this side of the apostolic age. Do not be deceived, my friends!

Moses, A Type Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

No one could successfully deny that Moses was a type of Christ. Moses himself said that God would raise up a prophet like unto himself (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Peter declared that the prophet was Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22, 23). Others in the Bible typify Christ, but none more fully than Moses. We shall notice some of the leading incidents in the history of Moses which seem to typify Christ.

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth that brought salvation from sin came through Christ (John 1:17). The law brought condemnation for sin, but the best that the Jews could expect under the law was to offer sacrifices, thus

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Moses, A Type Of Christ

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remembrance was made of sins year by year (Hebrews 10:1-4). Jesus gave us the New Testament which reveals how that grace and truth brought salvation by the blood of Christ through one's obedience to the truth (John 1:17; 8:32; Romans 6:17, 18).

Both Moses and Jesus escaped the decree of death as babies. When Moses was born, a decree was in force to exterminate all male children of the Israelites at birth (Exodus 1:22; 2:1-10). When Jesus was born, Herod decreed that all children two years old and under in Bethlehem and the coast thereof be slain (Matthew 2:16-18). The life of Moses was preserved from the cruel design of Pharaoh by the providence of God. Jesus was saved by divine intervention when an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt . . ." (Matthew 2:13-15).

Moses and Jesus were both qualified for the work they were appointed to do. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). Jesus was formerly with the Father. "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3; John 17:5; 2:24, 25).

Moses was sent to deliver the groaning Israelites from the Egyptian bondage (Exodus 3). Moses was willing to forsake his high position and the riches of Egypt in order to deliver his people from the bondage of Pharaoh and slavery of Egypt (Hebrews 11:24-27). Jesus was sent to save the world from sin (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; John 3:16, 17; I John 4:14). Jesus forsook all the glory and riches of heaven in order to deliver man from the bondage of sin, that man might have both

present and future salvation (II Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-8). The degree of poverty of Jesus on this earth is not fully comprehended. He was cradled in a borrowed manger (Luke 2:7). In manhood, Jesus had no place "to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). When Jesus was crucified, He was crucified on a cross that was rightfully man's (II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24). Even the grave was borrowed in which His body was laid (Matthew 27:57-60).

When God sent Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses felt that he needed someone to speak for him. God gave him Aaron for his spokesman (Exodus 4:10-17). Jesus knew He would not be on earth long, that He would return to the Father, and therefore, Jesus selected apostles to speak for Him (John 17:8, 14; Luke 10:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20).

Moses and Aaron performed miracles to prove their claims (Exodus 4:1-9, 29-31). Israel had to believe those credentials, turn from serving Pharaoh and follow Moses (Exodus 4:1-9, 29-31; Hebrews 11:29; Psalm 106:9-12). Likewise, Christ and the apostles performed miracles to prove their claims (John 20:30, 31; Mark 16:20; II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3, 4). There is no way that man can be saved from his sins without believing Christ and His word through the testimony of His apostles (Mark 16:16; John 3:16, 36; 8:21-24; 5:46, 47; Hebrews 11:6). It is also imperative that man turn from his sins in repentance and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24; Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts 3:19; 17:30).

By faith Israel crossed the Red Sea upon dry ground, and was therefore "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:1, 2; Hebrews 11:29). The Israelites were not saved from the Egyptian bondage until they were baptized unto Moses (Exodus 14:30). Today one becomes a child of God by faith in Christ when he is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27; Romans 6:3-6; Mark 16:16). Therefore, men are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Men are not, however, saved by grace through faith until they are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27; Romans 6:3, 4; II Timothy 2:10).

In conclusion, both Moses and Jesus were leaders of God's people. Moses stood as head of the

Jewish dispensation and was mediator between God and Israel. Jesus is the head of His church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). Jesus is our mediator (I Timothy 2:5). He is now at the right hand of God making intercession for us (Romans 8:34).

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You Get What You Expect

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effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

The gospel has tremendous power. It is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Yet it manifests this great power only within those willing to receive it. Because, and only because, the Bereans "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures" to verify the truth of what they heard, they were prepared and able to believe. "Therefore (because of their attitude toward the gospel, DK) many of them believed" (Acts 17:12).

Those who believe have a heart prepared for belief. Those who learn are those who listen to learn. Those who benefit most from a gospel sermon are those who come expecting to receive much. Good seed produces a bountiful harvest when planted in good soil.

Those who believe have a heart prepared for belief. Those who learn are those who listen to learn. Those who benefit most from a gospel sermon are those who come expecting to receive much. Good seed produces a bountiful harvest when planted in good soil.

On the other hand, those who leave a service empty, probably came empty, and with a closed, unreceptive mind. Those who leave the worship of the saints in a huff, mumbling that they "got nothing out of the sermon," no doubt came with nothing and came expecting nothing. (Of course, this assumes the service and the sermon to be scriptural and prudent).

The question is simple: What sort of hearer are you?

--801 N.E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

Religious Sinners

Continued From Page 1

must have the right spirit and the right action. It is little wonder that the Lord places so great emphasis on the heart! "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love:

Where there is injury, pardon:

Where there is doubt, faith:

Where there is despair, hope:

Where there is darkness, light:

Where there is sadness, joy.

Oh, divine Master, grant that I may not so much

Seek to be consoled as to console:

To be understood as to understand:

To be loved as to love:

For it is in giving that we receive,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned:

It is in dying that we are born

To eternal life.

Francis of Assisi

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Rattlesnake Religion



W. A. Holley

Scottsboro, Alabama is somewhat famous these days. "The Church of Jesus With Signs Following" is located there (although the Holy Bible says nothing about it). Its pastor is being held in the "Jackson County Jail following his conviction last Wednesday for trying to kill his wife with a rattlesnake bite." At this point, the Reverend Glenn Summerford, "A snake-handling preacher convicted of trying to kill his wife with a rattlesnake was sentenced to 99 years in prison yesterday" (Birmingham Post-Herald, 03/04/92).

Another member of the same church "was bitten twice, once on each hand, by a rattlesnake he brought to a Saturday service . . . according to church members." This misguided member is now in the hospital trying to recover from the snake bite. "Two congregational members drove a mile to the Jackson County Hospital to summon an ambulance after Crossfield fell to the floor and began losing consciousness. He was air-lifted to Chattanooga by helicopter late Saturday night" (The Birmingham News 02/17/92). We wonder why, if miracles are still available!!

Serpents have a long history of involving man in trouble. In Eden the serpent (the Devil), came and tempted Eve, leading her astray (Genesis 3:1-7; I Timothy 2:9-15). Genesis 3:15 foretells the day when woman's seed would eventually bruise Satan's head. This mighty act was accomplished through Jesus' resurrection (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Romans 1:1-4; Hebrews 2:14; Galatians 3:16). Serpents are used in Scripture to teach many lessons, both good and bad (Matthew 10:16; Proverbs 23:32; James 3:7).

Numbers 21:4-9 informs us of those rebellious Israelites who spake against God and against Moses. Because of their sin, God sent fiery serpents among them to punish them. Many were bitten and died. To alleviate the situation, God commanded a brazen serpent be hoisted on a pole in the midst of the camp and all who looked upon it would live. Those who believed looked and lived; those who did not look . . . died!! Strangely, the brazen serpent became an idol which the Israelites worshipped (approximately 775 years), but it was finally destroyed (II Kings 18:4).

But there is a higher and deeper meaning attached to the brazen serpent. Listen to John 3:14-16: ". . . As Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is not merely the believer, but the believer who obeys Him that is to be saved (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21).

"The Church of Jesus With Signs Following"

base their contention on Mark 16:17-20. These verses are true but they do not support those now handling rattle snakes or copperheads. These signs did not follow Mr. Summerford or Mr. Crossfield. These fellows ended up -- one in jail and the other in the hospital. So, it just did not work for them. Paul, a true apostle, possessing miraculous gifts, was bitten by a snake but "he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm" (Acts 28:3-6). One tempts God when one takes rash, foolish, unreasonable, daring, venturesome actions trying to demonstrate one's superior faith (Matthew 4:5-7). Satan wanted Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple in order to put God to the test. Jesus said, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This is the principle the snake-handlers are using.

Mark 16:17-20 was fulfilled during the miraculous age of the church. Miracles were necessary before the New Testament books were written (John 20:30-31). Miracle-working-power was the inspired man's credentials . . . his proof that he spoke for God. Now that the message in the Bible is complete, miraculous gifts are no longer needed (Galatians 3:5; II Corinthians 12:12; Jude 3; II Timothy 3:15-17).

In fact, the New Testament instruction foretold the end of "spiritual gifts." There were nine of them (I Corinthians 12:8-10). Count them. I Corinthians 12:31 shows that there is "a more excellent way," than spiritual gifts. Paul's illustration of his childhood shows that spiritual gifts belong to the infancy of the church (I

Corinthians 13:10-13).

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (I Corinthians 13:8-13, please read full text). These words stand. It is certain that there is no exercise, today, of any of these spiritual gifts . . . the claims of these false miracle-workers, notwithstanding. If these fellows possess miraculous powers let us see them demonstrate their gifts. It has been said that demonstration is the end of argumentation.

If these fellows possess miraculous powers let us see them demonstrate their gifts. It has been said that demonstration is the end of argumentation.

Hence, we must conclude that the nine spiritual gifts of I Corinthians 12:8-10, have ceased, failed, vanished away. What remains? "And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love)" (I Corinthians 13:13). Spiritual gifts have served their purpose and have vanished away.

We sincerely urge all people everyone to hear, believe, and obey the truth of God (Romans 10:17; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 4:15-17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

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

My Computer Does Not Know Jesus

John H. Allen

My computer has a problem. It computes okay. It even does tricks. It can underline, print in bold type, and it even has a spell-checker. Yep, it knows how to spell 120,000 words! That's more words than I know. It "beeps" at me whenever I misspell a word. If I type "wurds" or any other word it doesn't know, it beeps at me.

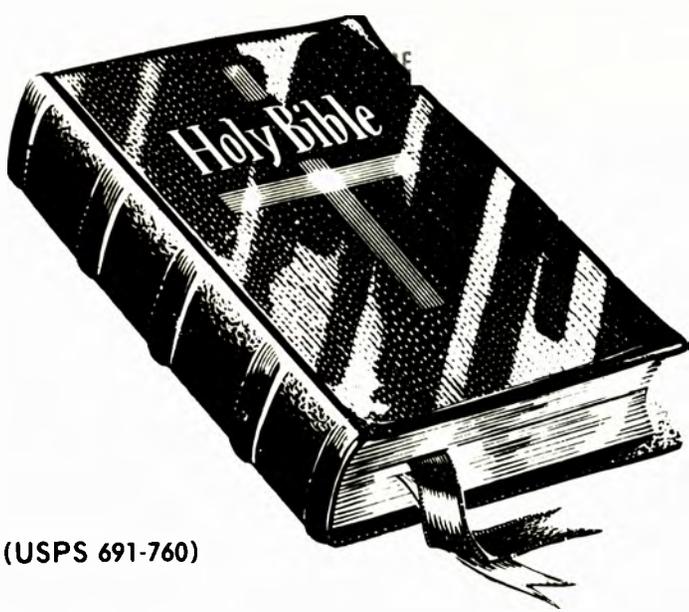
But the sad fact is, my computer doesn't know "Jesus." Every time I type "Jesus," it beeps at me. My computer knows all the presidents up to Reagan. It knows "AIDS" and it knows "cocaine." But it doesn't know Jesus.

What bothers me is that someone programmed my computer's silicon memory, but he (or she) didn't think "Jesus" was important, so He wasn't included. "Jesus" was left out of my computer's dictionary because Jesus has been left out of modern life!

Another neat thing about my computer is I can teach it new words by simply typing them into the dictionary's memory. Although I don't like to be "beeped" at, I have decided not to teach my computer "Jesus." So every time I type His name, I will still get "beeped," and it will remind me why I do what I do.

What bothers me is that someone programmed my computer's silicon memory, but he (or she) didn't think "Jesus" was important, so He wasn't included. "Jesus" was left out of my computer's dictionary because Jesus has been left out of modern life!

Sometimes on a rough day, I will hear Satan whisper, "Why do you work so hard?" (By the way, my computer knows "Satan.") But every time my computer beeps at "Jesus," I remember why we are here and why you and I work so hard for the kingdom. We all work hard because we know that a computer without "Jesus" is no big deal, but a world without Jesus is terminal. Lives without Jesus are coming apart. America without Jesus is dying. So I'll continue to be beeped at by my computer. I have decided that my computer won't know "Jesus" until the world knows Jesus.



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Word Of Truth

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Acts 26:25

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The Curse Of Ignorance



W. A. Holley

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of God, I also will forget thy children: (Hosea 4:6).

God does not want us to be ignorant. Paul taught

that ignorance of the Bible is a sin (I Corinthians 10:1; 11:3; 12:1; II Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:12; Colossians 2:1; Romans 1:13; 11:25). Jesus taught that truth can be known (John 8:30-32; 17:17). Those so-called philosophers who argue that truth cannot be known are false teachers!! If truth cannot be known, how does a false teacher know that it cannot be known??

Those so-called philosophers who argue that truth cannot be known are false teachers!! If truth cannot be known, how does a false teacher know that it cannot be known??

Ignorance is a curse to every worthwhile endeavor: To illustrate: Farmers, soldiers, business men, boys and girls, men and women, oftentimes fail, because of their ignorance of the right way to do things. Boys and girls, ignorance of God's laws of marriage and abstinence can bring about suffering of AIDS. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said to the Jews of His day, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:42). Yes, if they had known, the story would have been different!! But, alas, they did not know. How sad!

The Bible teaches that Gentile ignorance was the

cause of their moral depravity. They did not want to retain God in their thoughts (Acts 17:30-31; Romans 1:28). Romans 1:21-32 describes the terrible moral condition of the Gentile world. We suggest that our readers ponder these verses. In many instances, we are still beset with the same problems (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11-13).

Three times it is said that "God gave them up," because they were unwilling to listen to what God said unto them (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). God will "give up" on you, if your conscience becomes so seared till you will not believe and obey Him (I Timothy 4:1-3; Ephesians 4:19).

A sin is a sin even though one may not know it is a sin. "And if anyone sin, and do any of the things which Jehovah hath commanded not to be done; though he knew it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity" (Leviticus 5:17, cf. verse 15). The sin of omission is a deadly sin, too (James 4:17).

Strychnine is a poison even though one may honestly and sincerely think it is cake-coloring. Paul had a good conscience as he persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:9-11). Traffic laws are enforced whether or not the violator knows them. The sins of ignorance take a great toll in the lives of men and nations.

Thousands of the antediluvian world were lost because they did not believe God's message as preached by Noah (II Peter 2:5). The army of Pharaoh was drowned in the waters of the Red Sea because they were ignorant of the God of Moses (Exodus 14:26-31). The Babylonian captivity came upon the Jews of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's time because they did not know God's will (Isaiah 1:3; 5:13; Jeremiah 8:7). Jesus Christ was crucified upon Calvary's cruel cross because of His own people's ignorance (Acts 3:17; I Corinthians 2:8; Luke 23:34). The leaders of false religions and false churches have persecuted the true followers of God throughout the centuries (II Timothy 3:12; John 15:20; Acts 4:17; 5:41). Jesus encouraged His disciples, saying, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs

is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and 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 that were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Ignorance is indeed a curse! Ignorance takes away "the key of knowledge." Jesus taught, "Woe unto you lawyers (men skilled in the law of Moses)! for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52).

Even today, the teachers and preachers of the doctrines and commandments of men, blind countless souls to the truth of God's inspired word, thus taking away the only true "key of knowledge" available to the sons and daughters of men. Here, we suggest that Matthew 15:1-9, and Mark 7:1-13, be read with great care. Just as salt destroys the value of a glass of tea to slake one's thirst; even so, the "doctrines and commandments of men," makes the word of God void. One must never add to or take from the word of God (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19). If you would like to know the riddle of the universe read, believe and obey the commands of the Bible -- God's word (Genesis 1:1-2, Psalm 33:4-9; Job 38:1-ff).

Ignorance of the word of God robs of truth; it deprives one of the greatest treasure (Colossians 1:9-10; 2:1-5), thus, causing one to walk in darkness (Psalm 119:105; I John 1:6-10).

We suggest to our readers that preaching the gospel of Christ does not make sinners of people. As a matter of fact, they are already sinners (Romans 3:23; 6:23; John 3:18; I John 3:4). If preaching Christ to people makes them sinners, then we should stop preaching Christ to the whole world, let them grow up in ignorance, and thus, have all saved in their ignorance!! After this manner we would nullify God's will and way.

It is fair to say that the best commentary available

Continued On Page 2



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--Acts 26:25

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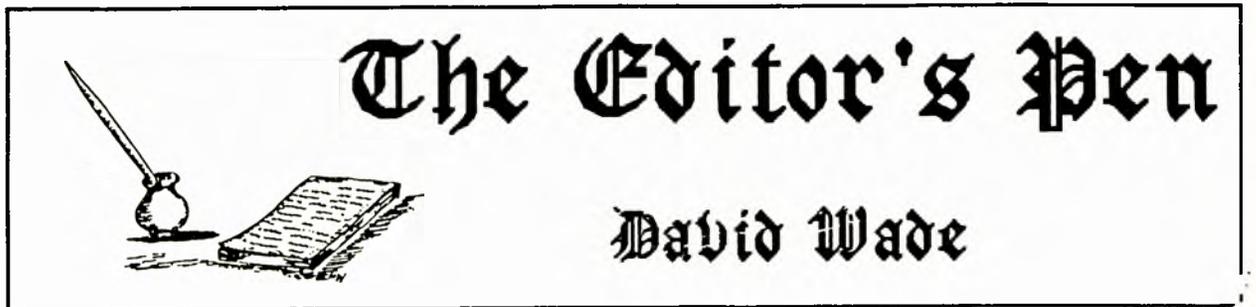
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The Curse Of Ignorance

Continued From Page 1

is what Jesus said about preaching the gospel. We read, ". . . All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20; cf. Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48). Read, study, rightly divide the word of truth, and meditate upon it, and great spiritual blessings will follow (I Timothy 4:13, 15; II Timothy 2:15; I Peter 1:22-25).

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



Word Pictures



David Wade

The word of God is likened unto several things that illustrate its nature, function and power. We shall briefly consider a few of these.

The word of God is likened to light. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path . . .

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:105, 130). Many other passages develop this theme, among them: John 3:19-21; 8:12; II Corinthians 4:3-6).

God's word is compared to food. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; cf. Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). The basics of the word are referred to as "milk" and the more complex matters are "meat" (I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14).

The word is compared to fire. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:29). "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing" (Jeremiah 20:9).

Jeremiah also referred to God's word as a hammer. "Is not my word . . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).

God's word is a mirror. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and no a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (mirror): For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22-25).

God's word is like a sword. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17; cf. Hebrews 4:12).

God's word is seed. "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). "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 for ever" (I Peter 1:22-23).

These seven pictures well illustrate the completeness of God's word to supply our every need. "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, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

What Thomas Missed By Being Absent On Sunday Evening



Don Williams

from Emmaus, telling the story that they had seen Jesus and that he had in fact walked with them (Luke 24:33-35).

It was Sunday evening, and the disciples had come together to meet. On many other occasions they had been together, but this time it was different -- their leader, Jesus, was not with them. He had been crucified and placed in a tomb. And now, two men had just returned

The Apostle John records what next happens: "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" (John 20:19). Imagine that -- John says the doors were shut, but the Lord came through the doors into their presence. All of the disciples were there, except for Judas who had hanged himself, and Thomas (also called Didymus), who was absent for some unknown reason. Think about it -- this was the same day that our Lord had risen from the dead -- it was the same that that he delivered a death -- like blow to the work of Satan (Genesis 3:15) in his resurrection

from the dead, and Thomas was not there to see him! What did Thomas miss by not being present at this meeting on a Sunday night?

He missed seeing the Lord (John 20:20). Jesus had appeared unlike any other man -- the bolted doors could not keep him out. He wanted them to know that he was the Saviour they had known and loved, and so he showed them the marks in his hands and in his side. Luke 24:43 records that he ate in their presence, thus showing he was not a ghost. They saw what Thomas refused to believe -- the Lord was alive!

He missed the happiness the others felt in being

Continued On Page 3

What Thomas Missed By Being Absent On Sunday Evening

Continued From Page 2

in the presence of the Lord (John 20:20). Imagine the "roller coaster" emotions they had felt in the past few days -- to see the Lord who they had believed in and served, now being treated as a common criminal. Their thoughts of an "earthly king" had literally been put to death on the cross. And not only that, now they feared for their own lives. And yet, now standing before them visually, actually, was the crucified, resurrected Son of God! No wonder they were happy. And yet Thomas refused to believe their testimony (John 20:25).

Thomas missed the Lord's blessing (John 20:19, 21). Twice Jesus said to them, "Peace be unto you." He who could calm the storms in a few words, could also in a few words to them stay their hearts and soothe their troubled lives. Can you not imagine what those words must have done to these disciples -- once again, they were ready to do the Lord's bidding. But Thomas missed out.

Because Thomas was absent, he was steadfast in his unbelief that anything had really happened in

his absence. You remember his words -- "except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). Thankfully, Thomas did have that opportunity to see and touch our Lord, but ho sad that it came eight days later!

Because Thomas was absent, he was stedfast in his unbelief that anything had really happened in his absence.

What do you miss when you excuse yourself from the worship of our Lord on Sunday nights? First of all, you miss being in the presence of our Lord. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus said, "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Although we cannot see him visually, through the eye of faith we can believe that he is with us as we sing praises

to his matchless name and study his Father's Word.

Second, we miss the blessings we receive from being in the Lord's presence and with his people. Is there not a grander people on earth that we can be with than with those same people that we plan to live in heaven with? (This would also apply to Wednesday night services, as well).

Finally, our continual absence of worship services anytime can contribute to our unbelief. God, in his wisdom, tells us "take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, (i.e. regularly), while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:12, 13). So we will not forsake the assembly, God says that we should "exhort one another" (Hebrews 10:25).

Thomas, for some reason, chose to miss a Sunday night meeting. Look at all that he missed out on. Our Lord will be present -- will you be present with him?

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

The Paschal Lamb, A Type Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

When Moses returned to Egypt to lead the Israelites from bondage, ten plagues were sent upon the Egyptians before Pharaoh would let Israel leave Egypt. The last plague was the death of the firstborn in Egypt. Israel was commanded to take a lamb for each house. The lamb was to be without blemish, a male

of the first year (Exodus 12:5). Israel was to shut it up on the tenth day of the month, and on the fourteenth day kill the lamb, and take the blood and put it on the two side posts and the lintel of the house. They were to roast the lamb with fire and eat it with unleaven bread and bitter herbs. None of it was to remain until the morning. That which did remain was to be burned with fire. The firstborn of both man and beast would be smitten in every house that did not have the blood on its doors. That day was, also, to be kept as a memorial throughout their generations (Exodus 12:1-14).

There are many resemblances between the Paschal lamb and Jesus. The lamb was taken from the best of the flock. It was to be without blemish, a year old, and was, therefore, offered in the vigor of life. Jesus, the son of God, came from heaven (John 3:16; 6:38; 10:17, 18; 17:5). He lived a life without blemish (sin) and died in the strength and vigor of His life -- at the age of thirty-three (Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 2:22).

The lamb was sacrificed and the blood of that

lamb was sprinkled on the side posts and lintels of the house in order for Israel to be saved from death in Egypt (Exodus 12:7, 13, 23). Jesus had to die in order for man to be redeemed from sin. The blood of Christ was both retrospective and prospective. It reached back and cleansed those under the Old Testament who kept up their blood sacrifices, and it reaches forward and cleanses the sins of those in the New Testament age who continue in contact with the blood (Hebrews 9:15-17, 26; 10:1-4, 9, 10). The blood of Christ must be applied or sprinkled on man's heart through the process of obedience (Hebrews 12:22-24; I Peter 1:2).

The lamb very fitly represents Christ through its humility and submissiveness.

The lamb very fitly represents Christ through its humility and submissiveness. Isaiah prophesied of Jesus, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). The Paschal lamb was to be roasted whole "with its head, with its legs and with the inwards thereof." The lamb was all to be eaten with bitter herbs and unleaven bread (Exodus 12:8). When Jesus was crucified, not a bone of His body was broken, even though the legs of the two thieves were broken (John 19:32-36). This fulfilled the prophecy of David, that not one of His bones would be broken (Psalm 34:20). As the Paschal lamb was ALL to be eaten with bitter herbs, Jesus is the bread of life, and we must hear ALL that He has spoken unto us (John

6:51; Matthew 17:5; Acts 3:22, 23). We must also accept Christ with sincerity of heart, and with all the sacrifices that as a Christian one may encounter (Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:26-33; Romans 12:1).

The Passover was for God's people, Israel, as a memorial of God's deliverance from Egypt. It was to be celebrated yearly. The Passover ended at the end of the Jewish age (Exodus 12; I Corinthians 5:7). The Lord's Supper is for Christians. It is to be celebrated weekly and will last to the end of the Christian age (Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:26). The Lord's Supper looks back as a memorial of the tragic suffering of Jesus on the cross to deliver mankind from sin. It also looks forward to His glorious coming, when all the dead shall rise, and the kingdom shall be delivered back to the Father. The first day of the week on which the Lord's Supper is to be observed is the day of the week on which Jesus arose from the dead.

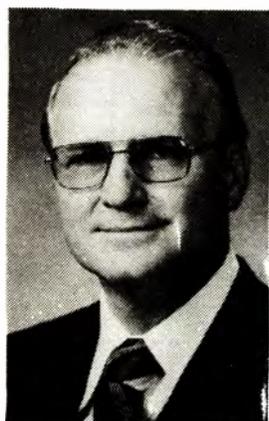
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Can We Know Who Is Right And Who Is Wrong?



Bobby Key

Many are teaching that we can never know who is right or who is wrong in religion. It is obvious, however, that everyone decides in his own mind that some are right and others are wrong religiously. One denies the existence of God and the other confesses God. It is not

difficult to see and admit that one is right, the other wrong. One man denies the deity of Jesus and the other believes it. Who is right and who is wrong? Only an agnostic would say he could not tell!

When someone says to me, "You ought not to say that you are right and others are wrong," I reply

that there is not a person on earth with any religious conviction at all who does not do this very thing. I just cannot go along with this watered-down theory which says maybe nobody is wrong after all -- maybe everybody is right. Some are saying these days that "one has a right to be wrong about many religious matters." Yes, our religious neighbors have had their influence. Their compromising attitude toward doctrine and morality has rubbed off on us. Efforts are being made to change our style of preaching, remodel the gospel, and modernize the church.

My friend, let's face it, two people can not both be right and teach contradictory doctrines. It is utterly impossible for two conflicting statements to be true. It is absurd to say that the earth is round and flat; two and two equal four and two and two equal five! One teaches salvation by faith only, another teaches salvation by the faith that obeys all

of God's will. One teaches that baptism is essential; the other, it is non-essential. One says the only kind of music authorized in worship is singing; the other comes saying God will accept the instrument as well as singing. Only the irrational or dishonest would claim both are right.

Someone says, "You believe that everyone is wrong who disagrees with you?" No, but I do believe everybody is wrong who disagrees with the Bible. The Bible is right, though every man on earth be wrong. Human wisdom will not enable us to know who is right or wrong -- but the Bible will (II Timothy 3:16). Truth means freedom. Error means condemnation. It does make a difference.

--324 17th S.W., Miami, OK 74354.

Remember The Days Of Your Youth



Cecil Corkren

God asked that the youth remember Him in their formative years. Throughout the ages the greatest poets and writers have been fascinated with the glory and freshness of youth. Shakespeare praised "the flourish set on youth." John Gay insisted that, "Youth's the season made for

joys." Some have compared youth to the dawn of a day, "full of purity, imagery and harmony." So, there is God's admonition to all youth. "REMEMBER NOW Thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, not the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Young man and young lady there will be no second time around to enjoy this wonderful period in your life, and the best way to enjoy it is to follow the instructions Paul gave young Timothy. He was to be "prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: follow righteousness, faith, charity (love), peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:21-22). In the formative years many youth have most of the answers to life's problems, but Paul said to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in manner of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). Many times the youth in a congregation demonstrate more faith, love, and purity than the older Christians. In some ways, the youth have courage to forge ahead in good works being the example of all the believers.

There are, no doubt, many reasons why youth is and always has been such a delightful subject, not only to poets and writers, but also to every normal

human being. But there is perhaps one reason that is more fundamental than the others -- a reason not often enough considered, and that is youth delights and fascinates us because a person in his or her youth most truly reflects the glory of his Creator in whose image he or she is made. However, in youth many dangerous warnings are given in God's word. Youth are not sheltered from the influences of sin in their lives, even though parents may avidly guard against the encroachments of Satan. Adults can guide them in useful paths of service to their Creator.

Let us who are older help the youth of our generation to overcome sin and point them to the Creator.

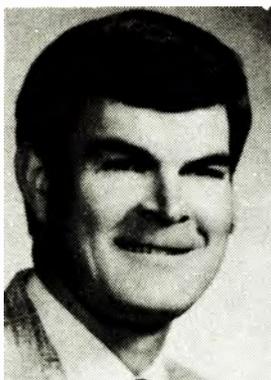
Notice "remember NOW thy Creator." Solomon said, "Rejoice O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, walk in thy ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine

eyes: but know thou, that for all of these things GOD WILL BRING THEE INTO JUDGMENT" (Ecclesiastes 11:9). God loves the youth of our times, but there are restrictions in sowing wild oats. We will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-8). When we look at the youth of the Bible, Jesus is, above all, the ideal; however, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Miriam, David, and Mary, the mother of Jesus all inspire us to be of greater service while in the youthful years of life.

We have many good dedicated young men and women in congregations throughout this country, as well as abroad. However, they, like ourselves, are tempted each day to sin, but have chosen like Moses to serve their Creator in the days of their youth. Let us who are older help the youth of our generation to overcome sin and point them to the Creator. The greatest quality in our youth is their love for the Creator. Jesus' words to his parents were, "Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business?" Young man, young woman, keep your mind on your Creator!

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Jasper, Alabama 35501.

Growing Older



Ray Hawk

David once said, "I have been young, and now am old" (Psalm 37:25). When I look in the mirror I see the wrinkles that I once saw on my Grandpa's face. I see the sprinkle of gray that once adorned his head. Time marches on. I am a grandfather now.

Some fight age as if they will ultimately win over it and be rewarded with perpetual youth. If death

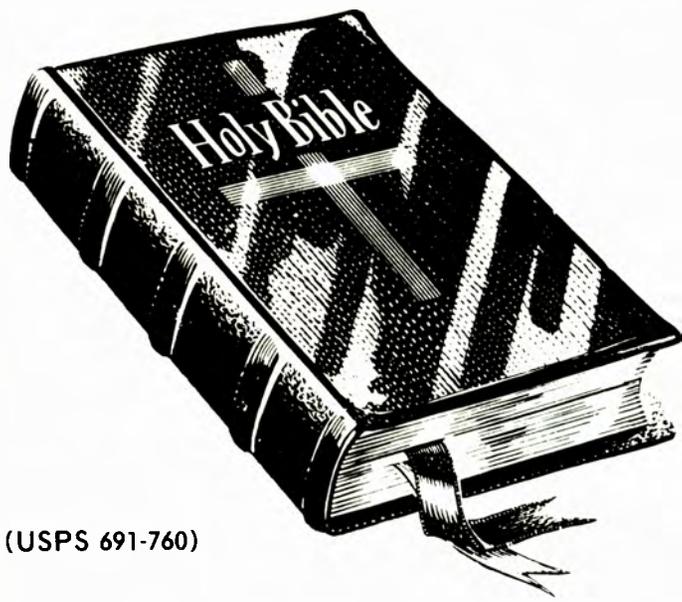
doesn't come first, age will have its way with us. My beloved and late mother-in-law used to say, "Beauty is skin deep, ugly is to the bone; beauty fades away, but

ugly just hangs on." The desire to remain young has created jobs and provided salaries for a lot of people in our quest for the fountain of youth.

Why not enjoy every new day that brings each new wrinkle and treat it as an adventure? Wrinkles can be badges of honor worn with pride. The more positive one is in his attitude, whether on aging, sickness, or death, the better he is at enjoying life, no matter what it brings.

Solomon said, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance. . . He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast . . . A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Proverbs 15:13, 15; 17:22).

--Via Old Paths, 801 NE 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.



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Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus
Words of Truth and soberness."

Orth the
ts 26:25

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I Corinthians 7 And Remarriage

Jack P. Lewis

Paul in I Corinthians 7 discusses questions about which the Corinthians had written him. Unfortunately, we do not have their letter and we have to deduce from between the lines what their questions were. Any exchange looked at from only one side is never completely seen.

Paul points out that the rights and obligations of marriage are mutual, not to be denied by either party of a marriage. He prefers that the single not marry, but concedes that marriage for them is preferable over their being tormented with passion (vv. 1-7).

The wife is not to separate from her husband, and if she does she has two options -- the one is to remain single and the second is to be reconciled to her husband. The husband should not divorce his wife (vv. 10-11).

The Christian married to an unbeliever who is willing to continue the marriage is not to divorce the unbeliever. Arguing from a premise that he and the Corinthians jointly held, Paul asserts that the children of such a marriage are holy; hence, the unbeliever in such a marriage is consecrated through the believer. Paul is not asserting that the marriage saves such a person, but that the marriage is a genuine marriage from which the unbeliever may be brought to salvation (vv. 12-16). If the unbeliever wishes to separate, the brother or sister is not bound, for God has called us to peace. Paul here seems to grant that separation is preferable to continuous fighting with an unbeliever who wants out of the marriage (v. 15).

Paul proceeds to say that he would have people stay in the condition in which they were called to the Christian life -- whether married or single (vv. 17-24). He speaks of an impending distress (without defining it) which makes it preferable for the single to remain single. He describes it as an approaching condition of society in which marriages would be disrupted, as would be mourning, rejoicing, and commerce (vv. 25-31). In such a time, whereas the wife or husband has to worry about the welfare of the partner, the single

has only his own well being to consider and therefore can devote himself with single-mindedness to the service of God. Though Paul does not elaborate on the conditions, one can see that if a time of persecution came, the married person would have to consider that his death for his faith would leave his wife alone. The single person would have no such burden to entice him to deny the faith. His ties with this world are less.

Paul's statements in verses 36-38 will always be perplexing. The translators of the KJV seem to have envisioned the section as dealing with a father's treatment of his daughter. The ASV made this interpretation clear in italics. However, neither translation gave us a clear insight into what "he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin" must mean. The twentieth century translations tend to interpret the passage as discussing a man and the woman he is in love with rather than father and daughter. Leaving our perplexities aside, though Paul prefers the single state, he grants that the man who marries the woman does well.

Finally, Paul affirms that marriage is for life, a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives; but if he is dead, she can marry whomever she wishes "only in the Lord." Even here Paul would prefer that she remain unmarried" (vv. 39-40).

The things that Paul did not say bother us now more than the things that he did say. In particular, we puzzle over "the brother or sister is not bound" (v. 15). It is easy to understand that Paul is saying they are not bound to continue in a marriage with an unbeliever when the unbeliever is not willing to go on. But the question we want to ask is, "What then?"

Paul used the Greek verb *dedoulotai* (v. 15) which verb occurs in eight N.T. passages: Egyptians enslaved the Israelites (Acts 7:6); Christians in conversion become slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:18); they become slaves of God (Romans 6:22); Paul made himself a slave of all (I Corinthians 9:19); before conversion Christians were slaves to the elemental spirits of

the universe (Galatians 4:3); older women are not to be slaves to drink (Titus 2:3); and troublemakers in the church are slaves of corruption (II Peter 2:19). While these cases give insight into the meaning of *douloun* in the N.T., they do not make any contribution to our question, "What next after the divorce?"

As a general rule (if not a comprehensive one) when one asks a biblical passage a question that the writer was not answering, he obtains from it the answer he has either consciously or unconsciously accepted on some other basis. He merely uses the passage to support a position he already occupies. It confirms him in his belief; but he cannot convince others with it.

I Corinthians 7:15 came into English with John Wyclif in the form: "For whi the brother or sistir is not suget to seruage in siche"; and into printed English with William Tyndale as "a brother or sister is not in subjection to soche." With the Geneva Bible it became "in subjection in suche things"; in the Bishops' Bible as "is not made subject to such things"; and in the Rheims as "is not subject to servitude in such." With the KJV (and later ASV) it became "is not under bondage in such cases"; the Smith-Goodspeed had, "In such cases the brother or sister is not a slave"; and then with the RSV it became, "in such a case the

Continued On Page 3



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Matthew 19:3-9

Harold Hazelip

The New Testament contains five passages with seven sayings of Jesus regarding the dissolution of marriage Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 7:10-11). Jesus' exceptive clause in Matthew's accounts has made these texts crucial in discussions of marriage and divorce.

A Question To Entrap

Matthew 19:3 records that Pharisees approached Jesus, testing him. They asked, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

Their question was to elicit a decision on a disputed text -- Deuteronomy 24:1:

"When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" (ASV).

Several theories were current as to the meaning of this text. The Mishnah relates:

The school of Shammai say: a man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her . . . And the school of Hillel say he may divorce her even if she find no favour in his eye (Gittin, IX 10; Danby transl., p. 321).

Jesus' Answer

Jesus answered his opponents:

"Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder . . . And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery"

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The Editor's Pen



David Wade

Transitions



David Wade

With this editorial I bring to a close my tenure as editor of the Words of Truth. Lord willing, my family and I will be moving from Jasper to begin a new work with the Slicer Street Church of Christ in Kennett, Missouri. The opportunities for service are great, and we look forward to this new work with great anticipation. My new office address is 209 Slicer Street, P.O. Box 725, Kennett, Missouri 63857.

In connection with this announcement, it is appropriate that I express my gratitude for a number of things. I am grateful for having the opportunity to serve my home congregation these past four years. It has been a very challenging and demanding work. Also I'm thankful for the fine way Sixth Avenue has supported me in mission work in years past. Most recently, the congregation sponsored me in a three week campaign in the Ukraine and will be sending me back there to direct the campaign in July 1992.

I'm grateful to have the opportunity to edit Words of Truth. The paper was begun in 1963 by the beloved brother Gus Nichols. It has been, and continues to be, a mainstay for truth. I'm thankful for all the writers who have invested much time

and study in the articles they submitted. I urge all of you to continue to write timely Bible-centered articles for the paper. Brother Joe Spivy, Associate Editor, will take over Words Of Truth, beginning the next issue.

I'm grateful to have shared the responsibility of the daily Words Of Truth radio broadcast. This program had its beginning on November 2, 1946. Most likely it is the oldest live thirty minute, daily religious radio program in the world. This program has done much to promote truth, unity and harmony among congregations of the Lord's people.

Also, I'm thankful for the opportunity to go serve the Slicer Street congregation. They have many good things going for them. They are united and are at peace among themselves. They have many organized programs with good congregational participation.

Last of all, I wish to express gratitude for my parents. They gave me a good start in life and continue to be a great source of encouragement. I wish everybody in the world could have had godly parents like mine. It makes all the difference in the world!

Many other things could be said, but may it suffice to close with the words of Paul, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

The Salvation Of Israel, A Type Of Salvation From Sin



W. Gaddys Roy

4:11).

Israel was in bondage in Egypt, and the Israelites were subject to and servants of Pharaoh. Their taskmasters were hard and cruel (Exodus 1). Sinners are in bondage to sin; they are servants of

The salvation of Israel from the Egyptian bondage was beyond question a type of our salvation from sin. Furthermore, the experience of Israel in the wilderness shows the possibility of one's falling from God's grace and failing to inherit the blessings which God has promised (Hebrews

Satan (John 8:44; Romans 3:23; 6:16; I John 3:7-10). Satan is a cruel master and makes life hard for sinners (Psalm 9:17; Proverbs 13:15; Numbers 32:23; Galatians 6:7). Therefore, one should not expect to get the most out of life while serving the devil.

The angel of God appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, while Moses was keeping the sheep of his father-in-law in Midian. God commanded Moses to go and lead Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 3:1-10). Israel had to believe Moses and accept his leadership in order that they might be delivered from the terrible bondage of Egypt (Exodus 4:1, 31; Psalm 106:12; Hebrews 11:29). The world is lost in sin. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Man could

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Matthew 19:3-9

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The Exceptive Clause

(Matthew 19:4-6, 9).

The Pharisees' attempt to entangle him by eliciting a definite statement on the question of divorce failed. Jesus referred them to God's original law at creation. Man and wife "are no longer two but one flesh." He concluded, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

The Pharisees attempted to neutralize his answer by appealing to Moses' permission of divorce in Deuteronomy. Jesus replied that this was a concession to the hardness of the Jewish heart, and was contrary to what God designed from the beginning.

The crucial sentence follows: "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

The exception which Jesus mentions for divorce is "unchastity" ("fornication," KJV, ASV). *Porneia* is rare in classical Greek. In Koine it denotes prostitution, unchastity, fornication, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse (Arndt-Gingrich). It is used elsewhere in the New Testament of a variety of sexual activity: I Corinthians 5:1 (incest), 6:13 (prostitution), II Corinthians 12:21 ("immorality," parallel to "impurity" and "licentiousness"; cf. Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:3).

The basic ground of marriage is violated by fornication and consequently this is the reason Jesus assigns for divorce. He upholds the significance of marriage as instituted by God from the creation over against the evasion of God's commandments by arbitrary interpretation by the scribes.

At least four different interpretations have been placed upon Jesus' words, "except for unchastity." First, some have understood Jesus to refer to unchastity on the woman's part before she was married. Deception in so important a matter would invalidate the marriage. This interpretation has not gained many supporters.

A second interpretation would read Jesus' words as, "except in case of a false marriage." The reference would be to a case where no true marriage had ever taken place. An incestuous union (I Corinthians 5:1f), the union of a polygamist with each of his secondary "wives," or a marriage of near relatives forbidden by the law (Leviticus 18:6-18) might be set aside, since these were not genuine unions. However, this view depicts Jesus as replying about putting away a false wife when the Pharisees had asked about putting away a real wife.

A third interpretation is that in the case of unchastity (immorality) separation is permissible but divorce is not. This seems to have been the predominant view in the second and third centuries A.D. Writers generally considered the second marriage sinful even if the first companion had died.

A fourth interpretation is that the natural meaning which a reader without any preconceptions would find in Matthew 19:9 gives to this clause the value of a true exception to the basic principle of the indissolubility of marriage. Marital infidelity can render ineffective or void the marriage bond. From a strictly exegetical viewpoint, this is the interpretation which best suits the Greek text. The defrauded partner may contract a new union after

separation.

The main thrust of the passage is not the legitimacy of divorce for adultery, but the illegitimacy of divorce for any other reason. It is not the exception that is in the foreground, but rather that there is no other exception.

The main thrust of the passage is not the legitimacy of divorce for adultery, but the illegitimacy of divorce for any other reason. It is not the exception that is in the foreground, but rather that there is no other exception.

--Via Bulletin, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1000 Cherry Rd., Memphis, Tn 38117.

"Widow Sues TV Evangelist For Fraud, Deceit"



W. A. Holley

The above caption was taken from The Birmingham News, February 28, 1992. From that edition we quote: "Five months after Tom Crowley died of kidney failure, his widow was still receiving mail from televangelist Robert Tilton, who said, "God spoke to me this morning specifically about you, Tom, and He's going to heal you."

Mrs. Crowley, a mother of three from the Tulsa suburb of Wynona, said Tilton's requests for donations, addressed to her husband, continued to arrive at her home well after her husband's death, September 30.

"Five months after Tom Crowley died of kidney failure, his widow was still receiving mail from televangelist Robert Tilton, who said, "God spoke to me this morning specifically about you, Tom, and He's going to heal you."

"These solicitations continued to assert . . . that God wanted to restore Tom Crowley's health," the lawsuit said, "that God was going to restore Tom

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I Corinthians 7 And Remarriage

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brother or sister is not bound." The twentieth century translations have not made essential improvements: NASV, NAB, NKJV read: "not under bondage in such cases"; the NIV: "not bound in such circumstances"; the TEV: "in such cases the Christian partner . . . is free to act"; and Taylor: "the Christian . . . should not insist that the other stay." All of these make clear that the Christian is a free person; none of them makes any contribution to the question, "What next?"

With these obscurities, some say that the person divorced by the unbeliever is free to marry someone else as 80 percent of the divorcees for whatever reason in the U.S. now do in the first three years after divorce. Others say, "no so." In my opinion there is a quite simple reason for our translations not making the matter clear, as well as for our inability to be able to convince each other of our respective positions. We are asking the passage a question that Paul was not discussing! As a general rule (if not a comprehensive one) when one asks a biblical passage a question that the writer was not answering, he obtains from it

the answer he has either consciously or unconsciously accepted on some other basis. He merely uses the passage to support a position he already occupies. It confirms him in his belief; but he cannot convince others with it.

The theologians who went before us taught us that biblical authority is found in direct command (or prohibition), approved example, and necessary inference. Those who resort to logic on I Corinthians 7:15 wish to argue that "is not bound" must mean "is free to marry someone else." Their logic is an inference, but not a necessary one. The divorcee has three options -- to remain single, to be reconciled to the divorced one, or to be married to someone else. The third option is not a necessary inference from the passage.

For these reasons, it would seem to me that I Corinthians 7:15 is no reason to supplement the Gospels with their "except fornication" (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) with an additional cause for remarriage -- "previous marriage to an unbeliever" who wanted out of the marriage.

The Salvation Of Israel, A Type Of Salvation From Sin

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not save himself. Therefore, God sent His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to save the world (Luke 19:10; John 3:17). Just as Israel had to believe in Moses and accept his leadership, sinners must believe in Christ and accept His leadership in order to be saved from sin and its terrible consequences (John 3:16, 36; 10:27-29; 6:46-48; 8:24; Hebrews 5:9; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).

Upon their faith that God had sent Moses to save Israel from the bondage of Egypt, Israel had to turn from serving Pharaoh and follow Moses. Sinners, through faith in Christ, must repent of their sins and follow Christ (Matthew 6:24; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30).

Even though Israel believed Moses and turned from serving Pharaoh and followed Moses, they were not saved from the Egyptian bondage until they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (Exodus 14:30; I Corinthians 10:1, 2; Hebrews 11:29). Now, we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9). We become children of God by faith, but we are not children of God by faith in Christ until we are baptized into Christ where salvation is (Galatians 3:26, 27; Romans 6:3-5; II Timothy 2:10). In every place in the Bible where baptism and salvation, or the equivalent of salvation, are mentioned together, salvation always follows baptism. Therefore, just as Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt when they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, so sinners are delivered from the bondage of sin when by faith they are baptized into Christ (Exodus 14; 21-31; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). The parallel is followed further when it is observed that Israel rejoiced and sang the song of deliverance after they were baptized unto Moses (Exodus 15). After the cross of Christ, people rejoiced after baptism because of their salvation and their relationship to Christ (Acts 8:38, 39; 16:30-34).

The law of Moses was given to Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20; Acts 7:38). The law of Christ was given from Mount Zion (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Luke 24:46-48). This law is revealed to us by the holy apostles and prophets and handed down to us in the New Testament. Israel's wandering in the wilderness is a type of the church in the world today. During the forty years that Israel wandered in the wilderness, their physical food was manna from heaven (Exodus 16:4; Joshua 5:12). The Christian's food is the word of God from heaven (John 6:31-35; Matthew 4:4; II Timothy 3:15-17). The word of God is complete, and we must not add to nor take from it (Galatians 1:6-8; II John 9).

Many of the children of Israel sinned and died in the wilderness (Numbers 16:49; 25:9; I Corinthians 10:1-10). Paul points to the fall of many of the Israelites in the wilderness, showing that in the church today we could fall from the grace of God (I Corinthians 10:1-13; Hebrews 3:12; 4:11). It is even possible for a child of God to so sin that it is impossible to restore him again

unto repentance (Hebrews 6:4-6). Jesus teaches in the parable of the vine and the branches that many branches would be burned (John 15:1-6).

Israel wandered in the wilderness forty years before they finally crossed the River Jordan into the promised land. Canaan was the promised land to Israel. The Christian's promised rest and

promised land is heaven (Hebrews 4:9; John 14:1-4). We will reach that land when we have crossed Death Jordan. When Jesus comes, He will raise the dead, the small and the great, and so shall the faithful Christian ever be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:12).

--2031 Highway 31 North, Deatsville, AL 36022.

"Widow Sues TV Evangelist For Fraud, Deceit"

Continued From Page 3

Crowley's relationships and that all this would come to pass if money was sent" to Tilton. As a matter of fact, Mr. Tilton was still sending letters to Mr. Crowley five months after his death, saying, "That God was still talking to him . . . that He would heal him."

Tilton says that "faith is rewarded with wealth." He urges his listeners "to make vows of faith, promising them that God will give them wealth in return. . . ." An ABC broadcast has shown that "Tilton deposited financial donations sent with "prayer requests," but that the requests didn't reach the minister" (The Birmingham News, 03/05/1992). According to newspaper reports, Tilton's church has had an annual income as high as \$100 million.

Lessons We Can Learn

(1) The Bible says nothing about Tilton's "Word of Faith Outreach Center Church." It would be appreciated if Mr. Tilton would supply scripture references which have the remotest application to his church. Hence, all scriptures which he uses to justify his appeals are misused and abused, since they are taken out of context. The New Testament teaching is addressed to that divine institution -- the church-- and not to any or all denominational churches (Matthew 16:18-19; I Corinthians 1:1-2; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16).

(2) The Lord Jesus Christ never taught that "faith is rewarded with wealth." Where is such a passage? If "faith is rewarded by wealth," why did Paul have to labor with his own hands to supply his needs?? (Acts 20; 33-35; 18:3; I Corinthians 4:12; I Thessalonians 2:9; II Thessalonians 3:6-12). Was Paul's faith sick and weak? Paul worked as a tent-maker to support himself while preaching the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:3). We wonder how much "tentmaking" Mr. Tilton has done to support himself??

(3) Mr. Tilton appeals to men and women who find themselves, because of health problems, in almost desperate and hopeless situations. They are like a drowning man who grabs for straws trying to save himself. Mr. Tilton preys upon the poor, the helpless, the desperate, taking money from them, to enrich himself!! Gullible people fall into his trap, being robbed of their money. Think of this man who still sends money-appeals to his victims long after they are dead!! What kind of a conscience does he have?? Does it ever bother him??

(4) Preachers should not try to bribe people with false promises, whether insinuated or blatantly stated. Some thought they could follow the Lord Jesus for "the loaves and fishes" (John 6:26, 66). No man should follow Jesus from selfish and material motives. Preachers can become far too greedy. Judas was such a preacher, being one of

the twelve (John 6:7-71; 12:1-9; 13:2, 26-27; Matthew 27:3-5; Acts 1:16-20). The love of money has been the downfall of many people, even preachers (John 12:5-6; I Timothy 6:9-10). Again, Balaam loved "the wages of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Numbers 22:5ff).

(5) Mr. Tilton claims that God talks to him directly, separate and apart from the Sacred Scripture. For example, "God spoke to me this morning specifically about you, Tom, and He's going to heal you," he said. How bold, brazen and egotistical, conceited, can one be?? All false teachers claim to have special messages from God! Micaiah, a true prophet, stood steadfast against 400 false prophets (II Kings 18:1ff).

God, today, speaks to the human family only through His inspired word (II Timothy 3:15-17; Jude 3). It is a sin to add to or subtract from God's Holy Word (Revelation 22:18-19). Another gospel is not God's original gospel (Galatians 1:6-10). The Pope of Rome and thousands of denominational preachers claim that God speaks through them. What a mess!! Contradictions . . . thousands of them . . . destroy the souls of men (Mark 7:6-13). There are greater riches than mere dollars (Hebrews 11:24-26; Matthew 16:26; James 1:9-11; 4:13-17).

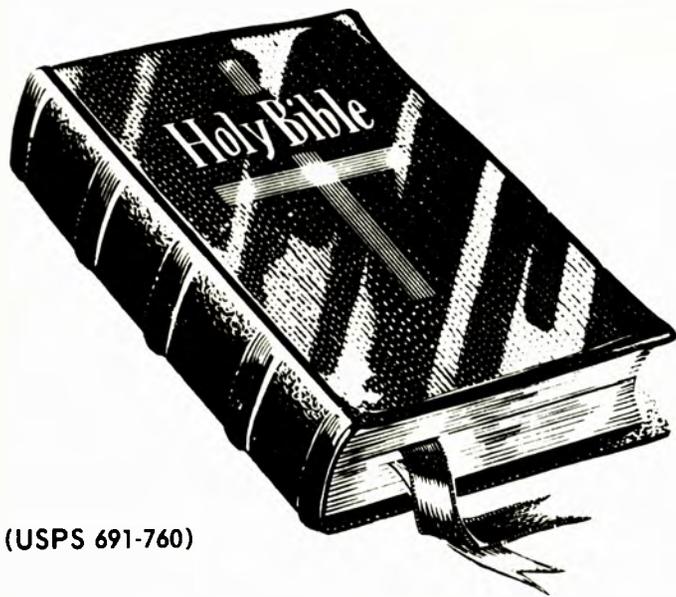
(6) The Reverend Tilton lays stress upon the value of wealth; when, as a matter of fact, one's soul is worth ten thousand worlds like this one (Matthew 10:28; 16:26).

We, therefore, urge our readers to learn the truth, believe it, and obey it. The Pentecostians heard the truth, believed it and obeyed it (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

Religion is not something we get; rather, it is something we do. "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

The Book of Acts is the one book of the New Testament that tells how sinners are saved. There are nine instances of conversion recorded in Acts. When we sum up these conditions of conversion as there recorded, we learn that sinners must hear God's word (John 6:44-45), Believe that God is (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31), repent of our sins (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; II Peter 3:9), confess the name of Jesus (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37), and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for, in order to obtain remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:20-21; Titus 3:5). Dear Friend: Will you obey your Lord today?

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



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Words Truth

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

—Acts 26:25

VOLUME 28

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"Preaching - A Special Privilege, An Awesome Responsibility! #1



Dan Winkler

Jesus said, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). Yet, thoughts vary as to what preaching should be and what preaching should do.

Be it known that I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus are God's own job description for the

gospel preacher. Herein, we find at least three responsibilities that are to capture the preacher's heart and engulf his time. First, the preacher is to "Protect" the gospel (I Timothy)! Second, the preacher is to "Preach" the gospel (II Timothy)! Finally, the preacher is to "Practice" the gospel (Titus)!

With II Timothy emphasizing the importance of preaching the gospel, we turn specifically to II Timothy 4:1-8 and find the answer to three pertinent questions about this great privilege and awesome responsibility.

Our First Question: "What Should Preaching Do?"

(1) Gospel preaching should first and foremost please God (v. 1). Yea, it is undertaken "in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus." As a student under brother William Woodson, I took a masters-level course entitled, "Preaching/Teaching From A Book Of The Bible." Our closing assignment was to preach a sermon. I remember to this day brother Woodson sitting over to the right with his grading sheet and stopwatch, timing everything from our introduction to our conclusion, even counting how many times one might say, "Uh," in the duration of his lesson. His efforts via that class and any others that he instructed, literally stretched you to the ultimate and helped make you the best that you could be upon that occasion.

Even so, every gospel preacher labors under the

reality of God, so to speak, sitting on the front seat with his own grading scale, giving close attention to what is being said.

Remember Peter before the Sanhedrin? They chastised him by saying, "We strickly charge you not to teach in this name" (Acts 5:28). In other words, "We told you not to preach that way." But with the boldness of the Lord, Peter replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Preaching must please God whether it pleases anybody else or not!

(2) Gospel preaching should prepare mankind for the judgment (v. 1). It is to be done in view of the Lord's "appearing." It has been suggested that the term translated "appearing," was especially used for the appearance of one like the Roman emperor. One can but imagine the detailed preparation a city would give to the arrival of such a dignitary.

Even so, every gospel preacher labors under the task of helping men and women prepare for the Lord's second coming.

Remember Paul's words, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10)? With almost the same stroke of a quill, Paul attached this concept of the judgment to his efforts as a preacher by saying, "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11). "There's a great day coming . . . are you ready for that day to come?" Every preacher gives himself to the burden of helping people respond to that question in the affirmative!

(3) Gospel preaching should stir people's hearts (v. 2). Preaching should, among other things, "rebuke." The word translated "rebuke," carries the idea of "bringing one to believe he or she is wrong." Therefore, an individual's heart serves as the bull's-eye of every sermon prepared

and preached.

Along these lines, it is best to remember that the hearts of men will be touched in one of three ways by sermons that are preached. First, some might be "Incensed," or angered over what the preacher says. Second, others might be "Interested," to the point that they want to acquire more knowledge about what the preacher says. Third, some will be "Inspired," to the point that they act upon what the preacher says. We must never forget that the preacher has no control over this part of the communication process. He is to do his dead-level best to fill his heart with the word of God and, by means of that same tool, reach out to the hearts of others. Even if he does his job well, the potential of these three responses prevail.

Remember the efforts of Paul on Mars Hill? After he completed his sermon "some mocked" (Acts 17:32). They were "incensed" over the idea of a resurrection. But note carefully, others said, "We will hear thee concerning this yet again" (Acts 17:32). They were "interested" in what Paul said and wanted to acquire more knowledge about the same. Finally, "certain men clave unto him, and believed" (Acts 17:34). They were "inspired"; that is, persuaded to act upon what Paul said. These varying responses to a proclamation of truth, bring to mind that old adage: "The sun which melts the butter, also hardens the clay!" One's response to the word of God is determined by one's heart! Preaching must keep this in mind and zero in on people's hearts anyway!

Conclusion:

Two more questions will capture our attention in future studies: "Of what should preaching consist" and "Why should preaching bear the balance of courage and conviction?"

--2159 Beltline Road, SW, Decatur, AL 35601.



Words Of Truth

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The Judgment Day



Johnny Ramsey

When we stand before God, the judge of all (Hebrews 12:23), what will our sentence be? When life's journey shall have ended, will we regret our poor decisions that caused us to be lost (Galatians 6:7)? Or shall we rejoice to know that our sojourn was meaningful (I John 4:17)? "Only one life, it will soon be past. Only what is done for Christ will last." How very true those sentiments! When the clock of life no longer ticks because eternity has been ushered in what will our destiny hold? What kind of day will judgment disclose?

IT WILL BE A DAY OF RECKONING. Will it be reward or remorse when we stand before our Maker? Will there be a handwriting on the wall of our record that proclaims our doom (Daniel 5)? Shall we reap the whirlwind of shameful activity (Hosea 8:7) or joy of our salvation? When God's "book of remembrance" is opened (Malachi 3), what will be the contents? Can we say what Nehemiah did? "Remember me, O my God, for good" (Nehemiah 13:31).

IT WILL BE A DAY OF REST. Yes, rest from a wicked world and a sinful environment awaits the faithful child of God (Hebrews 4:9). In Revelation 21:3-5 we see the fruition of godliness in a realm that knows no sickness, sadness or separation. Earthly corruption never enters and the toils of life are gone (II Corinthians 5:1). Fleshly lusts forsaken (I Peter 2:11) and even death shall have been turned into victory! We will be glad we obeyed. "Redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

IT WILL BE A DAY OF REUNION. Christ will

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

When Will America Learn?



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Many bulletins of recent date have included many comments about the events which followed the "innocent" verdict in the King trial. That decision was the catalyst that sparked destruction and riot that left 51 dead in Los Angeles and over 2300 injured in some manner, and a staggering damage to property in excess of \$718,000,000.

Jerry Jenkins wrote, "From the renowned 81 second tape, the affirmation that Mr. King was struck more than 50 times in that period, and 12 to 15 armed policemen standing in close proximity, it would appear, at least on the surface, that the force was excessive. The God of Mercy demands that injustice be denied. The mistreatment of any human being has never been acceptable to God who respects the rights of all. 'And the second (is) like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Matthew 22:39)."

Don Giles (Auburn, Al.) writes, "Since last Wednesday, I have watched, as most of you have, as the tragic events in Los Angeles and elsewhere have unfolded. I have been terribly troubled to see that we Americans, who boast of our civilized superiority when we view the Middle East or South Africa, are not so far removed from those places or the attitudes that prevail in them. We've seen on television the representatives of both sides in this conflict acting in 'knee-jerk' style. We've also seen the horrible results of these folks not thinking before speaking or acting."

Everyone has an opinion. But what makes one opinion better than others? Why is yours better than mine? Or mine than yours? What is an opinion? Webster says, "Belief stronger than

impression, less strong than positive knowledge; a belief; view; judgment. The judgment or sentiment which the mind forms of persons or things; estimation; sometimes favorable estimation; esteem." What this means is that our opinions may be formed without any facts or information of the case at hand. Therefore, such opinions are not especially reliable.

What should be asked is "What should Christians do? How should they respond in such situations?" We, as the people of God must react in accordance with God's word and not be caught up in the strife of the world, in the heat of the moment. Surely there are principles that we must follow; ways in which we must react if we are to let the world see Christ "living in us."

Paul told the Romans to present their bodies "as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God . . . and be not CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your minds . . ." (Romans 12:1, 2). In Micah 6:8 the prophet said "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Are we truly "changed into the same image from glory to glory" as of Christ if there is partiality and prejudice in our lives? Do these qualities in our lives mirror the reflection of Christ to the world? We must remember that one of the factors that lead to Christ's crucifixion was prejudice, "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him" (Matthew 27:18). God's people have no time or place for racism and bigotry. Let it never once be named among Christians for we must portray to the world one who is "in the world, but not of the world." The end of the matter as said brother Jerry Jenkins is that "Christians . . . will recognize that Christ and not Satan must reign in our lives."

--1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501.

Why Is He So Black?

A little girl, three years of age, was riding in a taxi with her mother when she pointed to the black driver and asked, "Mommie, why is he so black?"

The mother noticed that the man's shoulders stiffened at her question. She hastily searched for the right words that would satisfy both the black man and her daughter. She said, "Honey, God makes people as He makes flowers in the garden so the world will be more colorful. Some are white, some brown, some black, some yellow -- and there are all shades in between that makes us all the more interesting to look at, don't you

think?" The little girl nodded, for this made sense to her.

As they left the cab, the black man said to the mother, "Ma'am, when my little girl gets big enough to ask why some people are so white, I'll know what to tell her, thanks to you."

Oh, what a wise mother that woman was! She created light instead of darkness, a healthy mind instead of a diseased one, trust instead of suspicion. She thought too much of her daughter's soul, the black man's soul and her own soul to traffic in hate.

If Its Not In The Bible



Recently, a Baptist preacher made the following statement to his listening audience, "If it ain't in the Bible, it's from hell." Immediately this writer's mind was filled with questions that could be asked this speaker.

Victor M. Eskew Baptist denomination found in the Bible? It just isn't there. One can read about Christ's church (Matthew 16:18). He can read about the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). But, one will never find the Baptist Church mentioned. Would the speaker admit that it is from hell?

Dear readers, anything that cannot be found in the Bible does not originate with God (II Timothy 3:16). Satan, therefore, must be its author. Each person should examine every facet of his religious belief to see if it harmonizes with God's word.

Second, where is the title "Baptist" ever found in the Bible where it is applied to a Christian? John was called "the Baptist." This was appropriate because his work involved baptizing (Mark 1:4). The first century disciples were called Christians (Acts 11:26). But, there is not one reference in the Scriptures to a Christian's being called a Baptist. Is this denominational name from hell?

Third, where does the Bible teach that one can be saved by faith only? Only one reference can be cited in the New Testament where the two words are used together (James 2:24). This verse states: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." This verse condemns the idea of faith only. The Bible no where teaches this doctrine. Is this teaching from hell?

Finally, where does the Bible teach that baptism is not something which an individual must do to be saved? Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter wrote: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). Both of these passages teach that baptism plays a vital part in man's salvation. No one verse can be found which teaches that a man does not have to be baptized to

be saved. Is this doctrine from hell?

Dear readers, anything that cannot be found in the Bible does not originate with God (II Timothy 3:16). Satan, therefore, must be its author. Each person should examine every facet of his religious

belief to see if it harmonizes with God's word. Make this judgment now! In the last day, when that judgment is made for you, it will be too late (John 12:48, Matthew 7:21-23).

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The Judgment Day

Continued From Page 2

take us to be with Him (John 14:3). According to Matthew 8, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will be there. David spoke of his dead son in II Samuel 12:23, "I will go to him." Loved ones will be together again! I believe Hebrews 12:23 gives us a hint of the same. What joy it will be to see the redeemed of all the ages. There has never been a family reunion like this one will be!

IT WILL BE A DAY OF REVELATION. The one who knows us as we really are, and not as we pretend to be, will reveal our eternal destiny (Romans 2:16). The sins we were forgiven of by the Redeemer shall not be remembered (Hebrews 8:12; Psalm 31:1; I John 1:7), for which we should praise God. But hypocrisies and insincerities we tried to hide will be exposed and those things we

knew we should have done will haunt us: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

We are given this life to prepare for eternity, but many pervert this purpose and waste their moments upon earth. On that notable day, the infidel will confess the Lord (Philippians 2:9-11) and the disobedient will try to hide from the wrath of the Almighty (Revelation 6:15). May we be wise enough, now to search our ways and return to the Lord (Lamentations 3:40). Let us use our days wisely: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). And let us never "follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23:2). Heaven is too precious to miss!

--3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

What's Wrong With Being Tardy?

Jim Howard

We are all grappling with a widespread brotherhood problem -- TARDINESS. A member who serves as an usher in a thousand member congregation made the comment, "If we were to lock the doors at 7:00 (their worship hour) one-third would be inside and two-thirds outside." Recently in our 8:30 a.m. assembly the observance of the Lord's Supper, the central focus of our worship, had to be delayed for several seconds while latecomers entered the auditorium. Since it appears to be such a prevalent problem, let's ask the question, "What's wrong with being tardy?"

(1) IT'S DISRUPTIVE. One Bible school teacher stated that when the bell rang, one student was in the classroom. It was not till twenty minutes later that the last of the students finally arrived. How

can effective teaching take place in such a setting?

(2) IT INDICATES WRONG PRIORITIES. How many of us would be late responding to a dinner invitation to the White House? How often do we allow our children to be tardy to school? Or at ball games in which they are playing? How would it have gone over with your husband or wife for you to have been late to your wedding? Are you late to work (in which case you may be docked)? The point is, we are on time to events or occasions which are important to us. Since corporate worship should be among the most important times of our week, shouldn't we be on time?

(3) IT'S SELFISH. Because someone has failed to develop the habit of punctuality, that person's

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"Shall I Force My Children To Go To Church?"

(Author Unknown)

"Shall I make my child go to church?" Yes, and with no further discussion about the matter. Are you startled? Why? How do you answer Junior when he comes to breakfast on Monday morning and announces to you that he isn't going to school anymore? You know! Junior goes! How do you answer him when he comes in every besmudged and says: "I'm not going to take a bath." Junior bathes, doesn't he?

Why all this timidity then in the realm of his spiritual guidance and growth? Going to wait and let him decide what church he will go to when he is old enough? Quit kidding. You didn't wait until you were old enough. You didn't wait until he was old enough to decide whether he wished to remain dirty or be clean. Do you wait until he is old

enough to decide if he wants to take medicine when he is sick?

What will you say when Junior announces he does not like to go to church? That's easy to answer. Just be consistent. Tell him, "Junior, in our family we all go to church and that includes you!" Your firmness and examples will furnish a bridge over which youthful rebellion travels into rich and satisfying experiences in personal religious living.

The parents of America can strike a telling blow against the forces which contribute to our juvenile delinquency, if our mothers and fathers will take their children to worship our Lord regularly.

What If God Gave As I Give

Tim Spivy

How do I give? What am I to give? How much am I to give? Are we instructed to give? Of what are we to give? Can we give too much? Can we give too little?

Webster defines "give" - (1. to make a present of to another, 2. To bestow or grant to another, 3. to put into the possession of another, 4. to transfer from ones authority to that of another, 5. to offer to another.)

In giving it can be noted that there are four elements: first, the giver, second, the recipient, third, the gift, and fourth, the motive for which it is given.

From the beginning, the greatest givers, God the creator, maker and sustainer of all has given and given. He gave form to the earth, light for all (Genesis 1:3), fish for the seas, fowls for the air, and beasts, cattle and man for the land (Genesis 1:20-25). He gave atmospheric conditions that were conducive to life (Genesis 1:6-19). He gave men more than any other living being, in that he gave man the ability to reason and make intelligent choices (Genesis 1:26-31). He then placed him in a garden (Genesis 2:15-17) that needed no planting, watering or tilling of the soil. "In the beginning. . ." (Genesis 1:1). God is a great giver. He gave Abram a promise of a nation so large and plenteous that it would be innumerable (Genesis 22:17). He gave King Solomon great wisdom as he requested and granted him also riches and honor in abundance (I Kings 3:9-13). O, what a God we serve! In John 3:16 we find just how great God's love for us really is, "FOR GOD SO LOVED the world, that He gave his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON . . ." He did not give one of many sons, nor did he give something that meant nothing to him (Matthew 3:17; 17:5), but his only beloved Son. Therefore, if God gave through love, so then must we. If God gave of the things that were precious to him, so then must we!

Those things such as, but not limited to, time, talents, words, thoughts, ideas, drives, visions, money, family, and anything else that we hold dear should be included in our giving to God. Following the example of God, we should give out of love, not from duty; appreciation and not expectation, faith and not plenty, sacrifice and not abundance (I Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 11:29; II Corinthians 8:1-7). In II Samuel 24:24 we have the words of King David in which he said, ". . . but I will buy it of thee for a price: nor will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that WHICH COST ME NOTHING." David knew the importance of sacrifice. He knew how the things of this world can enslave the heart if we allow them to. He knew the significance of an investment in the way we serve our Lord God. Because of this, let us ask ourselves the question: "If God gave as I give, what would I have?" For many the answer would be an easy one -- "nothing." For others it would be an abundance of the things that God does not care for, and for others it would be, "a small amount of the things I need, but not near enough to sustain the life style I would choose to follow."

Yes, there are some who truthfully answer that they give sacrificially to God as they have opportunity.

God has been so good to us. Time, food, clothing, shelter, automobiles, America, friends, brothers and sisters in his Son, his only begotten Son, eternity as an end; so many blessings that if they

were to be put on paper, the libraries of the world could not contain them.

Permit God to be your example of giving! Remember that when giving of your influence, love and fellowship with one another. If God gave to me as I give to him, what would I have?

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The Burning Bush And The Church



W. Gaddys Roy

Moses' life was spent in three forty-year periods. The first forty years were spent in Egypt. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter when he was three months old. When he had to flee from Egypt for his life, he went to Midian. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and commanded him to go back to Egypt and lead Israel out of bondage. The last forty years were spent in leading the children of Israel in the wilderness.

There is no place where the Bible actually says that the burning bush was a type of the church. However, as one looks at the burning bush and the church, there is enough resemblance that it is worthy of attention.

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, God commanded Moses to take off his shoes for the ground on which he was standing was holy ground (Exodus 3:2-5). It was from that bush that God proclaimed His message to Moses to deliver Israel from the Egyptian bondage (Exodus 3 & 4). The church is holy ground (Hebrews 10:19-22; I Corinthians 11:17-34; Matthew 26:26-29). It is the church that is holy and not the building. The building in which the church meets may be used for many things, so long as the things being done are not wrong. There are, however, only certain things that the church must do. The church must proclaim God's message to deliver sinners from the bondage of sin (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 3:10, 11; I Timothy 3:15). From the same scriptures we learn that the church must edify the saints. The church must help the needy (Galatians 6:10; II Corinthians 9:12, 13). The church must also worship God (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:25). The work of the church could be perverted just as the church at Corinth perverted the Lord's supper with its love feast (I Corinthians 11:17-34). Love feasts were not wrong until the feasts led to the perversion of the worship of God (I Corinthians 11:17-34; Jude 12).

The burning bush was in the desert and was considered worthless and perishable. Nevertheless, it was from that bush that God spoke to Moses. The church is in the world, a desert of sin (I John

5:19). The church is considered by many as worthless and of little importance. Jesus would not have given Himself and purchased the church with His blood if it had been of little value (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). The church is composed of the saved, for the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

The fire did not consume the bush. This caused Moses to turn aside to see the bush (Exodus 3:2, 3). The church meets fiery persecutions, even today, but the church is not, and will not be, consumed (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18; Acts 14:21, 22; I Peter 1:7; 4:12).

God was in the midst of the burning bush (Exodus 3:4). God dwells in the church today (Ephesians 2:20-22; Colossians 1:27). The church is the temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16, 17). We should realize that God is in His holy temple (Psalm 11:4; Habakkuk 2:20; Hebrews 12:22-24). The church assembled, therefore, should be a place of reverence.

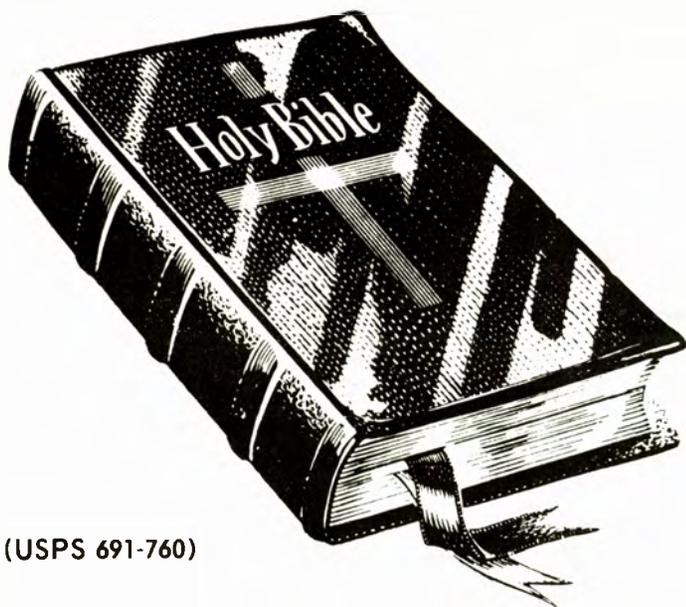
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What's Wrong With Being Tardy?

Continued From Page 3

failure negatively impacts the train of thought and feeling for hundreds of other worshippers.

(4) IT'S JUST PLAIN SLOPPY. Being tardy falls in the same category with the unprepared Bible class lesson or the unfulfilled assignment. It is demoralizing to those who are on time. Being tardy is just not consistent with the urgency of discipleship under the oversight of Jesus Christ. Being on time costs something. In the long ago it was David who said, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing" (II Samuel 24:24). It takes effort to be punctual. It was the Preacher of Ecclesiastes who admonished, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). As the hymn puts it, "Give of your best to the Master." Let's all make the commitment and put forth the effort to be on time for every occasion of work and worship of the church.



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

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

in the
26:25

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The Danger Of Tobacco

Vance Hutton

One pressure, among many, facing out children and all teens is whether or not to smoke, chew or dip. These have to do with the use of tobacco. Although public approval of tobacco use has declined, many of our young people continue to take up the habit. Let us consider the following reasoning on this subject. Nicotine is derived from tobacco and is responsible for many of the effects of tobacco use. Nicotine is one of the most lethal poisons known. An oral dose of forty to sixty milligrams is lethal in adults. There is enough nicotine in three or four average cigarettes, if put directly into the bloodstream, to kill a person. This drug is very addictive.

Nicotine is one of the most lethal poisons known. An oral dose of forty to sixty milligrams is lethal in adults. There is enough nicotine in three or four average cigarettes, if put directly into the bloodstream, to kill a person. This drug is very addictive.

When considering smoking, one finds that smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and disease, killing more people than alcohol, illegal drugs, accidents, homicides, and suicides combined. The nation's third leading cause of death is passive cigarette smoke, killing nearly 53,000 non-smoking Americans each year. Cigarette smoking is not a gamble because ALL smokers are affected in some harmful way. On the average, one to two pack-a-day smokers cut six to eight years off their life span.

How about the smokeless tobacco? Just an half ounce wad of tobacco kept in the mouth for an hour could cause as much absorption of nicotine as eight or nine cigarettes. Approximately 27,000 people get mouth cancer each year in the United States. Of that number, about nine thousand will die. Some of the strongest smokeless tobacco has not been on the market long enough yet to really determine its effects. This tobacco may be smokeless, but it is a far cry from being harmless.

The nation's third leading cause of death is passive cigarette smoke, killing nearly 53,000 non-smoking Americans each year.

Could I use tobacco in good conscience? The answer to me would be NO! Our bodies are not our own (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). We are to be stewards or caretakers of all that we have (I Corinthians 4:2). We must be good stewards and

living sacrifices before the God we serve (Romans 12:1, 2). Our bodies are not to be brought under control by any other person, any other thing, or any influence (I Corinthians 6:12). Our bodies, as Christians, house the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19) and that alone should prompt us to use caution and care in this matter.

Often the Bible speaks of temperance or self-control under the authority and control of the Lord and His will for our lives. The golden rule, as found in Matthew 7:12 should surely be called into this discussion as we must respect other people.

Can one quit the habit? Surely the Lord will help us to be victorious in the things He desires of us (Philippians 4:13). It should be easier for a Christian than any other, and many people have quit the habit. All could who would. I know there are many other ways we harm our bodies, such as over-eating, becoming over weight, and a lack of exercise. Many of us, myself included, need more self-control in these areas too. May we all discipline ourselves in whatever area or areas needed to harmonize with the will of God (Colossians 3:17).

--P.O. Box 371, Double Springs, AL 35553.

Whatever You Do (Part I)



Winfred Clark

anything you do. It will cover everything we do. It

Have you ever had someone say to you, "Whatever you do, be careful?" I am sure you have heard this from a parent or someone who showed concern. You will also find a similar phrase in your Bible. It will appear as the title indicates saying, "Whatever you do." This phrase would cover

will help us to properly see ourselves in relation to a number of things.

(1) TO THE AUTHORITY OF GOD! This is one of the very things Paul would address when he wrote to the church at Colossee. Here he would say, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). When he said all was to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, he means that all is to be done by his authority. There can be no question about his authority. This is a well established fact. It is recorded in such a way that man should have no

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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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Editor

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The Role Of The Woman In The Church

John Brackin

The role of the woman in the church is causing great confusion today. Articles about the women's liberation movement have been standard fare for many newspapers and magazines in the past year. One that I read says: "Too long women have been forced to take a back seat to men in the work force. They should have the right to go out in the world and make the living." If this be the case, should the man stay home and become the "house husband?" Should every man, woman, boy and girl be allowed to do that which is right in his or her own eyes (Judges 21:25)?

A few years ago the use of women in public preaching was condemned among most churches. This has changed now as some denominational churches are allowing women to preach, and female teachers are knocking at the Lord's church, seeking to be preachers.

God forbids this to happen. We will become as the people of old who told Samuel that they wanted a king like the ones around them. Some say that we are living in a time that does not agree with the teaching of the Bible, but we must remember that the Bible is God's way! A few years ago the use of women in public preaching was condemned among most churches. This has

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Children Deserve The Best



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Solomon is credited with being the author of Psalms 127:3 which says, "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." When Jacob met Esau after many years absence, he said concerning his children that "God hath graciously given (the children) thy servant" (Genesis 33:5). All have heard the expression, "As the twig is bent, so the tree will grow." This may well be the reasoning behind so much instruction given to parents for the rearing of their children -- their heritage.

Solomon said, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11). In his writing he often spoke of correction for children (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15). I suppose that most parents remember well the words of Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

In the New Testament we learn from Paul, "provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). In Colossians 3:21 he noted, "provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." To the credit of Abraham it was said by God, "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. . ." (Genesis 18:19).

Parents and grandparents, remember this, children deserve the very best from you, their parents and grandparents. They have a right to:

1. Hear you pray earnestly and often. James 5:16; Luke 11:1-4; I Thessalonians 5:17.

2. Go to worship and Bible classes with you regularly. Psalm 122:1; Zechariah 8:21; Hebrews 10:24, 25; Acts 2:42.

3. See you sacrifice for the Lord. Romans 12:1; Mark 12:42-44.

4. Hear you talk to others about becoming Christians. Acts 20:20; Luke 10:1, 2; Galatians 6:10.

5. Go with you to visit the sick and bereaved. Matthew 25:31-46; John 11.

6. Be taught the Bible by you. Ephesians 6:4; II Timothy 1:5; Deuteronomy 6:3-9.

7. Hear you praise the church and her leaders (they will receive abundant criticism from others). I Timothy 5:17.

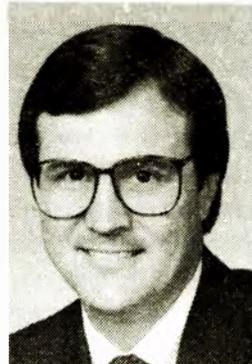
8. Be encouraged by you to seek and obey the truth always. Proverbs 22:8; Ephesians 6:4.

9. See you putting the Lord first in your giving as well as your living. Matthew 6:19-21, 33.

10. Know the Christ living in you. Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13; 1:21.

Yes, children deserve the best, the very best. They especially deserve to see and hear it in their parents and grandparents. Nothing but the best is good enough for them. Do not short-change the heritage which God has given!

"Preaching - A Special Privilege, An Awesome Responsibility!" (No. II)



Dan Winkler

As mentioned in our previous study, I Timothy ["Protect" the gospel], II Timothy ["Preach" the gospel], and Titus ["Practice" the gospel] serve as God's job description for the gospel preacher.

II Timothy 4:1-8 answers three pertinent questions concerning this special privilege. We have already seen the text's answer to the question, "What should preaching do?" First, it should please God (v. 1). Second, it should prepare mankind for the judgment (v. 1). Third, it should stir peoples' hearts as implied in the term "rebuke" (v. 2).

**But Let's Think Of Another Question:
"Of What Should Preaching Consist?"**

(1) Gospel preaching should be Bible-saturated (v. 2). Paul said, "Preach the word." The Bible is not a compilation of suggestions. It is not some anthology of philosophy. It is not the source book for debate propositions. The Bible is our guide for life, our road map to heaven (II Timothy 3:16, 17; Cf. Matthew 7:21).

Therefore, gospel preaching is just that, a preaching of the gospel. None of the stories we concoct nor illustrations we compile can ever replace that grand old Jerusalem gospel (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 20:24; Romans 1:15; I Corinthians 15:1; Galatians 1:11, 12; Ephesians

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The Role Of The Woman In The Church

Continued From Page 2

changed now as some denominational churches are allowing women to preach, and female teachers are knocking at the doors in the Lord's church, seeking to be preachers.

I do not want any good sisters to think that I have an axe to grind. I only desire the church to be true to the Bible. There is a liberal element in the Lord's church today that sees no harm in women teaching over men in Bible study or from the pulpit. This attitude is prompting women to lead in public prayer, serve at the Lord's table and lead singing.

Let us see what the scriptures have to say about this subject. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). The wife is not the slave of the husband, yet we read, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands" (Ephesians 5:23, 24). Paul said that the husband is the head of the wife. By inspiration, he compared Christ as the head of the church to the man as the head of the wife. These passages declare the husband is to be the head of the family, and the wife is to be in submission. Furthermore the passage declares the husband is to be the head

of the family, and the wife is to be in submission. Furthermore the passage declares that her submission is to be similar to that which she yields to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22).

Notice First Timothy, chapter three, where Paul gave rules applicable to men who are to be elders. The man must be able to rule his house and care for his family. If he cannot handle the minor responsibilities of one family, then he is not to be responsible over a group of families. Similarly, if God will not allow the woman to manage the minor responsibilities of being the head of the family, it is ridiculous to assert that He would give her the larger responsibility of overseeing many families in the church. In the church, and in the home, the woman is to be in submission to her husband.

Some say that Ephesians, chapter five does not speak of the unmarried women, that it applies only to the married. This view appears plausible and reasonable to many, but it is unscriptural. Paul said, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). The verse states: "the head of every man is Christ." That is true of every saved man and every unsaved man. Paul is not talking about Christians

only for Christ is Lord of every man; and whether every man acknowledges it or not does not alter the fact (Romans 14:11, 12).

Regardless of man's response to Jesus Christ, Jesus is still in the plan and program of God as the "head of every man." This verse also says that the man is the "head" of the woman. Paul is not talking about husbands only. Christ is the head of "every man," whether he is a Christian or not, and whether a husband or not. Likewise in God's plan, man is to be head of the woman, whether he is a husband or not, and whether the woman is a wife or not. He is talking about the relationship of the sexes: and he says clearly that "the head of the woman is the man."

Paul very plainly says that the woman is commanded "not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:12). This makes it clear as to what a woman is not to do. God has made a place for the woman in the church, and we can see in the lives of godly women in the New Testament that their lives touched the ones around them.

To the elders of the Lord's church I hope and pray that you, most of all, will take a Bible stand, and will not give in to the forces of darkness around us today.

It is not my intention to put women down, nor to place them in a role that the scriptures do not sanction. What the scripture says is to be our guide and rule in all matters of the church. God gave the scriptures through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16). They are to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. For the good sisters in the Lord's church I give thanks to the Lord, and it is my prayer that there may be more like them.

To the elders of the Lord's church I hope and pray that you, most of all, will take a Bible stand, and will not give in to the forces of darkness around us today. To the liberals who want the Lord's church to conform to this day and time, I pray for you and your souls.

--1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33803.

Honesty

James W. Watkins

Honesty is an excellent, commendable virtue. It is defined in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary: 1. Chastity, 2. A fairness and straight forwardness of conduct: Integrity. Further: 'Honesty implies a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way.'

Oh, how we appreciate honesty. Even though service, in any area, comes high today, we are glad to pay an honest man. It gives us confidence. WE know that an honest man will do the best that he can and deal fairly with us.

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Whatever You Do (Part I)

Continued From Page 1

trouble understanding such to be the case. Remember that Jesus said himself, "All power hath been given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . ." (Matthew 28). This is a clear statement of fact that would have to be refuted to deny that authority belongs to Jesus. The apostles respected the fact that he did have authority. This is seen in the fact that they commanded people to, "repent ye and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). They rested their case upon the authority of Christ. When Paul said, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed," he would have in mind the matters of doctrine and practice. All the teaching that was to be done was to be done in the name of the Lord, or by his authority. We all know that they could command people to be baptized by his authority because we have his word for such. But we also know that they would have no authority for asking an alien sinner to come to a mourner's bench to pray for the forgiveness of his alien sins. But why would that be the case? They would have no word for such teaching nor the authority for such a practice. You will find no case where they ever did so. But suppose someone did so today, would he have more authority than the apostles had? Absolutely not. But if the apostles had no authority for such, is it not presumptuous for men to practice and teach such today.

What of the matter of sprinkling? Can this be done with the Lord's authority? Not anymore than

When he said all was to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, he means that all is to be done by his authority. There can be no question about his authority. This is a well established fact. It is recorded in such a way that man should have no trouble understanding such to be the case. Remember that Jesus said himself, "All power hath been given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . ." (Matthew 28).

one could call men to a mourner's bench. There is no example by word or deed that would give one the authority to practice such. Wouldn't the admonition, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord," cover such a practice? But suppose that one persists in the fact that such is going to be ignored. Wouldn't that be ignoring an apostolic admonition?

--1602 W. Hobbs St., Athens, AL 35611.

"Preaching - A Special Privilege, An Awesome Responsibility!" (No. II)

Continued From Page 2

6:19)! After all, it's "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

(2) Gospel preaching entails a sense of urgency (v. 2). Gospel preachers are to "be urgent in season, out of season." Some unknown author offers us the following observation: "The average sermon contains about five thousand words. Most preachers deliver about ninety sermons per year, which totals about four hundred and fifty thousand words. A full-length novel contains about fifty thousand words, so this means that a preacher is expected to produce the equivalent of nine full-length novels each year.

Be it one sermon or ninety a year, every lesson should carry with it a sense of urgency. When we open the word of God to others, our responsibility as preachers is to "command and teach" (I Timothy 4:11); yea, we are to "speak and exhort and reprove with all authority" (Titus 2:15)! Preaching is not an exercise in futility; it is a matter upon which heaven and hell rests. Therefore, it must be undertaken with a great sense of urgency!

Be it one sermon or ninety a year, every lesson should carry with it a sense of urgency. When we open the word of God to others, our responsibility as preachers is to "command and teach" (I Timothy 4:11); yea, we are to "speak and exhort and reprove with all authority" (Titus 2:15)! Preaching is not an exercise in futility; it is a matter upon which heaven and hell rests. Therefore, it must be undertaken with a great sense of urgency!

(3) Gospel preaching is corrective (v. 2). It is to "reprove;" that is, burden others with their faults. Preachers are, thus, responsible for indicting others with sin and helping them agree with the indictment.

Advertising for their television newscast, a certain station used the following slogan in a magazine: "Give us one hour and we will give you the world." Even so, gospel preachers should say, "Give us one hour -- thirty minutes Sunday morning, thirty minutes Sunday night -- and we will help change the world!" Is it not interesting that in this book that deals with the responsibility of preaching the gospel, we find so frequent a reference to correcting others (II Timothy 2:24, 25; 3:16; 4:2)?!

(4) Gospel preaching is to be constructive (v. 2). Not only is the preacher to "reprove and rebuke," he is to "exhort." Did you see the balance? Too frequently, those of a radical spirit can't see anything good about the church. Their heart is sour, their soul is poisoned, and their lessons pulsate with an incessant pessimism. All they can seem to do is "reprove and rebuke" them. At the same time, those of a more tolerant spirit, wish to bury their head in the sand and deny the very existence of things in the church that need to be corrected. All they wish to do is "exhort." Both extremes are wrong and must be avoided.

As mentioned previously, gospel preaching should correct others. While doing so, we preachers should also "follow after things that make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (Romans 14:19; Cf. I Thessalonians 5:11). Paul's charge, "let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Ephesians 4:29), should apply to our preaching as much as our everyday use of the tongue.

There is a phrase in the book of Hebrews that should be taken to heart: "By reason of time you ought to be teachers" (Hebrews 5:12). Note that phrase, "by reason of time." It takes time for individuals/congregations to become what God expects. In the process, preachers must exercise utmost patience (Cf. Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12, 13).

(5) Gospel preaching should carry with it a sense of patience (v. 2). Our efforts are to be undertaken "with all longsuffering." When a preacher moves into a new area, he must remember that he is addressing people who have been a part of that congregation for years, sometimes decades. Every work is different. There are parochial attitudes and emphases unique to the area. He must keep that in mind and know that "Rome was not built in a day."

There is a phrase in the book of Hebrews that should be taken to heart: "By reason of time you ought to be teachers" (Hebrews 5:12). Note that phrase, "by reason of time." It takes time for individuals/congregations to become what God expects. In the process, preachers must exercise utmost patience (Cf. Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12, 13).

(6) Gospel preaching must be doctrinal (v. 2). We are to preach with all longsuffering and

"doctrine." Take the time to read I Timothy and II Timothy and circle the many times you come to the word doctrine or teaching (I Timothy 1:3, 10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; II Timothy 1:13, 15-19, 25; 3:14, 16, 17; 4:3, 4). There is a specific body of truth that we must guard with our very lives and herald with every ounce of our being.

Remember, Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Again, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (II Timothy 3:16).

Conclusion

One last question remains for our interest: "Why should preaching bear the balance of courage and compassion." Next time!

Honesty

Continued From Page 3

Notwithstanding the blessings of honesty and the good name it gives to its practitioner, there are some things it cannot do which should be of interest to all those who sincerely desire to walk with The Good Shepherd.

A certain service station owner, efficient, highly skilled and completely honest, was, nonetheless, brusque with his customers. He stated exactly what he thought, regardless of circumstances, and, if he happened not to feel good on a particular day, such was reflected in his attitude and conduct. Honesty, though much to be desired, cannot produce kindness and consideration for others.

Saul of Tarsus, though honest in his determination to serve God, found himself destroying the people of God in his misguided zeal. Honesty, therefore, will not make one right. There is a standard of right and wrong, the Word of God. One must honestly hear and apply the Word to his thought, speech and conduct in order to pursue the right course in life.

In Matthew 7:21-23 we find Jesus saying, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." That the people in this passage, represented as standing before the judge in the final day, are honest and sincere cannot be denied. This fact impresses upon our minds the sadness of the occasion. It teaches, however, quite emphatically, that honesty and sincerity alone cannot save.

Our Lord said, "He that doeth the will of my Father" shall be saved (Matthew 7:21). In our honesty then, let us honestly look at the gospel as the power of God to save (Romans 1:16). Let us honestly consider the blood of Christ as the only cleansing agent in our redemption and honestly yield in faith to repentance, confession of our Lord and baptism for the remission of sins. Continued honesty is the application of God's Word will produce kindness, consideration, the right course in life and eternal salvation.

--305 West Church Street, Lewisburg, TN 37091.



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but my words are words of truth and soberness."

the

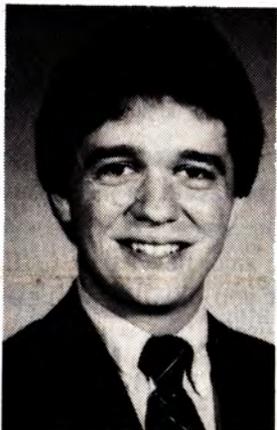
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All You Need Is Love



David W. Hester

Immediately, people began to use the slogan to justify all manner of behavior. Although the cry was for "love," the reality was quite different.

Those who chose to participate in the rebellious actions of that era were characterized by some specific attitudes. First, they demonstrated the attitude of rebellion against authority. Second, they possessed the attitude of rebellion against rules. Third, they had the attitudes of selfishness. Finally, they displayed the attitudes of disdain for any objective standard.

All of these attitudes was cloaked in the slogan, "All You Need Is Love!" When the time came for some to face authority and questions concerning their behavior, though, "love" was transformed into hate.

Today, we in the body of Christ face much of the same way of thinking. From this same generation come those who appear to be sweet and loving on the surface, but who in fact are pressing for radical agendas. Their slogan could be, "All You Need Is Love!"

From these individuals we hear speeches against the authority of Scripture. To them, the "traditional" way of looking at the Bible is bad. Never mind that Paul wrote, ". . . not to go beyond what is written" (I Corinthians 4:6, ASV). We also perceive a bias against the authority of elders. The Bible still says that elders are to be "overseers" (Acts 20:28). From these men we detect a different mindset about worship. According to them, we

must cater to the people's wants; if that includes changing our "traditions," so be it. If we don't change, they say, our people will leave. The Word of God, friends, continues to set the standard for worship. Jesus said we must worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Selfishness is not the norm! Finally, we derive a peculiar attitude concerning the truth. Some say the Bible is not a "case law book" by which we may pattern the church. However, Jesus still says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Today, we in the body of Christ face much of the same way of thinking. From this same generation come those who appear to be sweet and loving on the surface, but who in fact are pressing for radical agendas. Their slogan could be, "All You Need Is Love!" From these individuals we hear speeches against the authority of Scripture. To them, the "traditional" way of looking at the Bible is bad. Never mind that Paul wrote, ". . . not to go beyond what is written."

In spite of all these troubling ideas, the Lord's church must still be a positive force for good in the world. In fact, the phrase "All You Need Is Love" is good if used in the right way. The Bible is replete with passages concerning the type of love God's children must possess.

The Word of God, friends, continues to set the standard for worship. Jesus said we must worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Selfishness is not the norm! Finally, we derive a peculiar attitude concerning the truth. Some say the Bible is no a "case law book" by which we may pattern the church. However, Jesus still says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). In spite of all these troubling ideas, the Lord's church must still be a positive force for good in the world.

First, we must love God supremely. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Mark 12:30). This is an all-encompassing statement! It demands much more than most are willing to give. It demands that we bow our will to his will.

Second, we must love our fellow-man. Jesus continued, "And the second is like unto it, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:31). This also demands much from God's people, because it implies we care for them. Hear the words of the apostle: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially

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Words Of Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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—Acts 26:25*

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Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The Reason For The Hope



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Peter enjoins the Christian to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the HOPE THAT IS IN YOU with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

"Hope" is defined as "desire with EXPECTATION of fulfillment or

attainment." People often "hope" for various things; for material gain, for fame, etc. But often that "hope" is not "hope" because they have no basis for the expectation of the fulfillment or attainment of that for which they "wish." Christians, like farmers of the earth, are creatures of hope. We live in hope, we plant in hope and we thresh in hope, just as the farmer, hoping for a harvest, will plough and plant, expecting the rains to follow. This hope is based on the dependability of God as Jesus said, "my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The hope of the Christian is eternal life (Titus 3:7), yet as Paul stated, "if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19). Thank God, the Christian does not trust to blind hope, but has as Peter commanded a "reason for" that "HOPE THAT IS IN YOU."

The Christian hope is based on the atoning

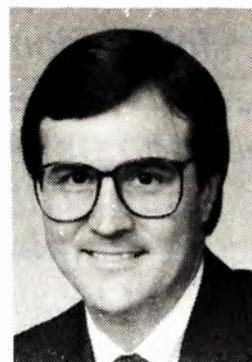
sacrifice of Jesus for sins. In Romans we find that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ . . . God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 6:23; 5:8). The angel told Joseph that "He shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Brothers and sisters, without the atoning sacrifice, the blood of Jesus being shed, you would have no HOPE.

Years ago Clem Thurman said, "The death of Christ is the means of our forgiveness, but His resurrection gives us the assurance of HOPE in both forgiveness and the joys of heaven." Peter declared that God "begat us again unto a living HOPE by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (Peter 1:3, 4).

Jesus declared, "I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die . . . If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 11:25, 26; 14:3).

Jesus DID rise from the dead for "it was not possible that he should be holden of it (death and the grave" (Acts 2:24). Paul forcefully declared "BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD . . ." (I Corinthians 15:20). There my brothers and sisters IS THE REASON FOR THE HOPE!

"Preaching - A Special Privilege, An Awesome Responsibility" (No. 3)



Dan Winkler

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). Such was the commission of Jesus. But, just think of how many different opinions exist relative to preaching. Some think preaching should be like:

A squirrel's tail - long and "fur" to the end!

A rat's tail - short and to the point!

A rabbit's tail - just a suggestion!

With I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus being God's own job description for the preacher ["Protect" the gospel (I Timothy); "Preach" the gospel (II Timothy); and "Practice" the gospel (Titus)], we get a great deal of insight into what

preaching should be and do.

In previous studies, we have allowed II Timothy 4:1-8 to address two questions: "What should preaching do?" and, "Of what should preaching consist?" Let's close our series by turning to this passage for one more question.

**"Why Should Preaching Bear
The Balance Of Courage And
Compassion?"**

(1) We should preach with courage and compassion because, though it is unpopular, it is still needed (v. 3, 4). Paul said, "The time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables." Would anyone deny that such a time

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Get Ready



Vance Hutton

Two of the soils in the parable of the sower (Luke 13 & Matthew 19) represented human hearts that would obey the gospel but because of trials, hardships, cares, riches and pleasures would turn away from the truth and their pursuit of heaven.

Many examples of such people are mentioned in the years that followed Acts 2. Some were restored from this lost condition, such as Simon in Acts 8. Some seemingly left this world in the apostate condition such as Demas (II Timothy 4:10).

This heart-rending trend continues among the Lord's disciples. This dangerous route is being traveled by some everywhere. Have you given in to willingly forsaking the assembly? What do you find to do more pleasing or even more enjoyable than worship? Is your name constantly on the weekly absentee report from services? Have you ceased working for the Lord? Do you realize your condition? Peter referred to your condition as worse than before becoming a Christian when you were without Christ and without hope (II Peter 2:20-22). You have made shipwreck of your faith, you are no more walking with Christ and you have fallen from grace. Your adversary seeks to devour you (I Peter 5:8). Please do not allow him to sift you as wheat (Luke 22:31). Do you realize your frailties? You could meet death or the Lord's return in the very condition you are in today. Where would your destiny be? James said separation is awaiting the unfaithful (James 5:19-20). Jesus said a furnace of fire awaits you or me if we leave the land of opportunity in the unfaithful state (Matthew

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"Preaching - A Special Privilege, An Awesome Responsibility" (No. 3)

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has arrived?

Gospel preaching is not popular. Never has been. Maybe that's why Paul told Timothy to "suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist" (verse 5)! Every gospel preacher should memorize and frequently quote to himself the words of Paul: "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10)! The time will come when we have to ask, "Am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). Even so, we must speak and stand by the truth. God's word is still "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Whether it's what people want to hear or not, it is the only message that will give them the hope of salvation.

(2) We must preach with courage and compassion because great soldiers of the faith

are passing the torch, and we cannot afford to stumble (v. 6, 7). Note how Paul began those familiar words, "For 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." He began with the term "for," joining what he was about to say with what he had said. He was encouraging young Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" and preach as he specified, because he knew that his time was short. How many of us recognize those wonderful names: Gus Nichols; G. K. Wallace; N. B. Hardeman; etc.? Too many of us can reflect on our days when, in college, we sat at the feet of many wonderful and faithful men of the Book. But many of these have already passed on to glory. If not, they are semi-retired or nigh unto cutting back their schedules because of the infirmities of age. Who will pick up the torch and carry it faithfully,

continuing to save the lost with an unadulterated message of truth? With the church being tossed to and fro amidst the tumult of contention, ecumenical slants, and denominational error, who will have the courage to stand up and be counted?

In the last inspired epistle Paul wrote, he charged Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Herein lie the words of a man concerned about the direction and destiny of the Lord's church. He, thus, trained a young man to pick up and carry the torch after his departure.

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Get Ready

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All You Need Is Love

Continued From Page 1

unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). This takes true Christian love!

Third, we must love Christ and his church. Though some would say that we can separate Christ and the church, the truth is, one cannot love Christ without also loving his church! Jesus promised to build his church (Matthew 16:18), and he is its head (Ephesians 1:22-23). Consequently, Peter exhorts us to, "love the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17). When we love the church, we will of necessity love Christ, and when we love Christ, we must always love the church!

This love is not easy! It means giving up our cherished notions of how we think things ought to be done. It implies loving the brethren when they are unlovable (isn't that what Jesus did for us?) and caring for their needs. It demands taking stands for truth, with the right spirit, (Ephesians 4:15), even when those stands may be unpopular. In short, it requires unselfishness!

Fourth, we must love the truth. This love is demonstrated in keeping the commandments. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). It is also demonstrated in not tampering with the word. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11a). "Whatsoever

ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the son" (II John 9). Truly, if we love the word, we will neither "turn from it to the right hand or to the left" (Joshua 1:7).

This love is not easy! It means giving up our cherished notions of how we think things ought to be done. It implies loving the brethren when they are unlovable (isn't that what Jesus did for us?) and caring for their needs. It demands taking stands for truth, with the right spirit, (Ephesians 4:15), even when those stands may be unpopular. In short, it requires unselfishness! Possibly this may be the hardest thing for some to do of younger generations; it is difficult for all. However, Jesus never promised the way to heaven would be easy; he did say his burden is light (Matthew 11:30).

As a member of "Generation X," (the generation after the "baby-boomers,") I am frequently amused by the selfishness often demonstrated by some of those who were of the generation before me. However, I am not amused by the trouble often brought to the church of our Lord by those who claim we need to cater to a certain group of people! Brethren, the Gospel is for all men, of all ages, for all time! (Romans 1:16). When we get about the business of saving lost souls, restoring the erring, and helping those in need, we won't have any time for our selfish wants; we will "be about my Father's business!" (Luke 2:49). May God help us all to submit ourselves to God and his word, and demonstrate the right love toward all men.

--Route 2, Box 100, Haleyville, AL 35565.

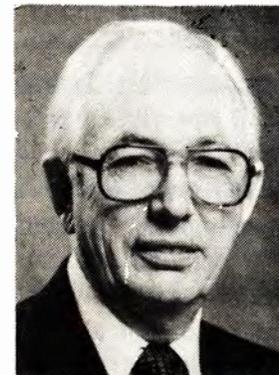
13:41-32).

If you are unfaithful, God does not want you to be lost. It is not His will that a single one be lost (II Peter 3:9). The word came to Jonah the second time (Jonah 3:1). The Lord says open to Him once more (Revelation 3:20). God the Father, stands as the father in the story of the prodigal son, ready and anxious to forgive (Luke 15). The Spirit through the words says, "Come Home!" Each of you is valuable to us and the Lord. Why not get your life back in its proper order? Be present on Sunday with a willingness to repent and start all over again. God is faithful and just and will forgive (I John 1:9).

May we all remember that no one having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom (Luke 9:62). We will partake of what Christ offers only if we are faithful (Hebrews 3:14). Let us endure to the end that we might be saved (Matthew 10:22).

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Whatsoever You Do



Winfred Clark

Last week we suggested that the phrase "whatsoever ye do" can help us properly see ourselves in relation to a number of things, and we mentioned one, TO THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.

(2) TO THE SERVICE OF GOD! These kinds of admonitions will also help us to see ourselves

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Whatever You Do

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service to God.

Notice what Paul will say to the servants who are Christians at Colosse. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" (Colossians 3:23). He will go on to show in the next verse that they must not forget that "ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:24). But what are those servants doing? What is their activity? If you will go back to verse 22 you find that they are serving their masters according to the flesh, working on the day to day basis. That means the menial tasks that they are called upon to perform like cutting firewood, milking goats or cows, working the fields or caring for the cattle. It may mean cooking the meals and cleaning the house. It could mean making up beds and washing dishes. One might have a hard time seeing that this has anything to do with service to God. But that is the point Paul is making. He is saying that this is exactly what they are doing; they are serving the Lord as they conduct themselves as they should on the job.

That means the menial tasks that they are called upon to perform like cutting firewood, milking goats or cows, working the fields or caring for the cattle. It may mean cooking the meals and cleaning the house. It could mean making up beds and washing dishes. One might have a hard time seeing that this has anything to do with service to God. But that is the point Paul is making. He is saying that this is exactly what they are doing, they are serving the Lord as they conduct themselves as they should on the job.

Paul not only tells them to serve but he tells them how they are to serve, not with eyeservice or as menpleasers. They are not to work just when the boss is looking, but to work and do the job when men are not present for they are to please the Lord. They are to serve "heartily," to put their heart into their work. This will insure the quality of work they do. This surely is something to think about in our day when poor workmanship is so very common.

In this context he also speaks of what parents are to do with children (Colossians 3:21). Meeting the parental responsibilities is also involved in service to the Lord. What a difference this would make in the matter of child rearing.

(3) TO THE GLORY OF GOD! Paul wrote the Corinthians saying, "or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). What is the context? It has to do with things that could be considered incidentals. But such could be used in a way to have an adverse effect on some who were in the church. One could give offence by such conduct to a Jew, Gentile or the church. But rather than doing this, one should be interested in their salvation (I Corinthians 10:33).

But, "what does this have to do with the glory of God?" Obviously it means that we are to be concerned about how our conduct affects those who would become Christians and those already

We are to be concerned about how our conduct effects those who would become Christians and those already in the church. The church is said to be "the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32). If I honor God, surely I must honor that which belongs to him. When I respect the church I surely honor the God of heaven who planned the church.

"Preaching - A Special Privilege, An Awesome Responsibility" (No. 3)

Continued From Page 3

In the last inspired epistle Paul wrote, he charged Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Herein lie the words of a man concerned about the direction and destiny of the Lord's church. He, thus, trained a young man to pick up and carry the torch after his departure.

in the church. The church is said to be "the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32). If I honor God, surely I must honor that which belongs to him. When I respect the church, I surely honor the God of heaven who planned the church.

If I honor the church, I will honor God who gave his Son to die for the church (Acts 20:28). Suppose one shows no respect for the church, he would divide and destroy the church, or would not support the church with his purse or presence? Would you consider that such action is for the glory of God? How can such glorify God when such activities say that the church is something useless? Could that glorify God?

If I give glory to God I will give him the credit and respect that is due him. But how many times do we take credit for that which God does for us? Remember when Herod made a speech and the people shouted and said, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man" (Acts 12:22)? Remember that man was smitten of an angel from heaven and Luke says, "Because he gave not God the glory" (Acts 12:23).

When you take these three instances where we are told "whatsoever you do," what do we learn? We learn that if we are to glorify and honor God as we should, we will serve him with all the heart and will carefully walk according to his authority. There are not many things that we face today in our relationship to the Lord that cannot be solved by adhering to these things found in these passages. May God help us to try!

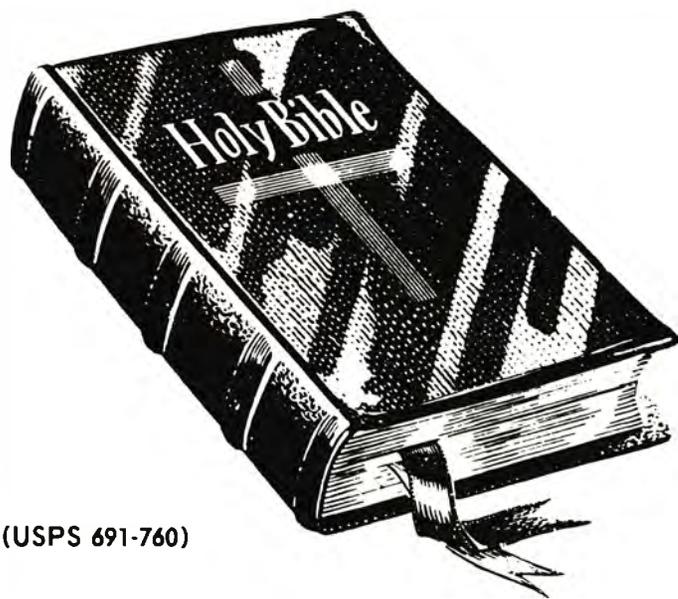
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(3) We must preach the gospel with courage and compassion because many still hunger for the truth (v. 8). Such could be implied in the description of those mentioned by Paul as people who "have a love for his appearing."

Of one preacher it was said, "I have no recollection of when he began his sermon. However, he hadn't spoken a half a dozen sentences before I felt as though he and I were the only ones in the room!" Many still feel that way about gospel preaching. They "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6) and "long for the spiritual milk which is without guile" (II Peter 2:2). Is it not time we gave our attention to these faithful instead of the whining of the weak who wish to be petted and attend church so that they might leave feeling better about themselves?

Conclusion

With the courage of a thousand giant-slayers and the compassion of a God, rich in mercy, as gospel preachers, let's "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19)!



(USPS 691-760)

Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but my words are words of truth and soberness."

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VOLUME 28

JUNE 12, 1992

NUMBER 24

No Pattern For Worship???



Winfred Clark

One can hear almost anything these days. But one of the things that we are reading and hearing is "there is no pattern." This sort of thing is not coming from the Bible believing, humble soul who rejoices that he or she is a member of the body of Christ, but from some among us who have

become dissatisfied with the church and its worship.

Well meaning people would say, "there is no place where you have in one case or verse all the things that we do in worship," or they may say, "the New Testament does not contain a minute pattern for every detail of the work and worship of the church." Thus, to such people there is no pattern. Sometimes that person would decry the idea of "proof texts." This sort of thing would be called "cutting and pasting." Sooner or later this sort of approach will lead one to claim that those five items of worship are a matter of tradition and thus can be discarded or changed as one sees fit. In fact one can find where it is suggested that such items have their origin in the synagogue and leave the impression that such is not found in the scriptures.

Is this indeed the case? One need not wonder, we have the word of the Lord Jesus Christ on the matter when he said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). That means that such worship is to be according to the truth or in harmony with the truth. But we also know that the word of God is said to be the truth (John 17:17). Thus Jesus would say worship is to be according to the word of God. This within itself will say that worship is set within certain parameters or limits. We are not left to do just anything in the area of worship. We are restricted by the truth, the word of God. If that is not the case then why would Jesus say "in truth"?

Well meaning people would say, "there is no place where you have in one case or verse all the things that we do in worship," or they may say, "the New Testament does not contain a minute pattern for every detail of the work and worship of the church." Thus, to such people there is no pattern. Sometimes that person would decry the idea of "proof texts."

When Jesus spoke of such being "in truth" this would mean the truth, the word of God would have something to say on the subject of worship. When the word of God speaks either by setting forth an example, command or inference, the truth has been set forth on that subject. When the truth has been stated, we are not at liberty to go beyond or alter that which is demanded.

There is no question but that the early church assembled for worship. In fact, they were commanded to assemble (Hebrews 10:25). We are aware that there were times when they did assemble, for Luke recorded such, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples at Troas came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them" (Acts 20:7). We have the fact that they assembled and are told why they assembled -- they came together to "break bread." That was something they had been commanded to do, as Paul would say to those in Corinth, "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you" (1 Corinthians 11:24). What Paul told them to do was

from the Lord. Why did those at Troas come together? To break bread, and the "breaking of bread" is put for the Lord's supper. Would they not be doing this because of the command of the Lord? Who then would say that there is no pattern for worship? There is surely a pattern here. It did not just happen spontaneously but was planned.

One needs to see the fact that this occurred with apostolic sanction. Paul was at Troas, in fact he waited seven days (Acts 20:6). In this assembly you will find Paul preaching and that is in harmony with what Luke describes elsewhere (Acts 2:42).

Paul instructed some as what to do in their assemblies, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:2). Did Paul imply that they would and should come together on the first day of the week? If he did not understand that they would do so, how would he have to say it to imply such? Not only does he demand such a gathering, but he also says that giving is to be a part of that meeting. Also, this church came together to eat the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:20). We are aware that their abuses made it impossible for them to properly observe the supper, yet they were coming together with such in mind. Why would they do this? For the same reason those in Troas did so.

Is there a case where there is an example, command or inference that the early church met on any other day than the first day of the week to eat the Lord's supper? No such exception can be found, thus we have a pattern for the Lord's supper observance. We have no doubt about such being done in the assemblies. We also know that we have an example of such taking place on the first day of the week.

Does the fact that not all of the acts of worship are found in Acts 20:7 mean that we are free to add what we would like or remove others? Such is a

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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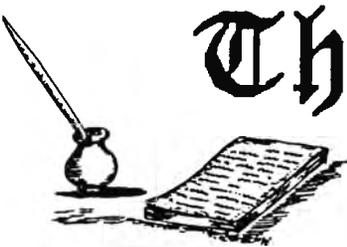
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The Editor's Pen



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Are "My Rights" Really Worth It?



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Man often opens his mouth and speaks before he thinks "better" of it, or put another way, he often "puts his mouth in motion before putting his brain in gear." There is one story in the life of the fictional character Paul Bunyan that has its setting in the winter when it was so cold that even

the tongue and to demand "my rights" by one man. "The young lady was nervous because it was her first day on her new job in a fine restaurant. A nice looking couple arrived for dinner and was seated at her table. Somehow she mixed up the order and the husband went into a rage. After much objurgation he informed the waitress that he intended to take his complaint to her manager. Devastated, the young woman removed herself to a back room, sobbing in embarrassment and insult.

The customer consoled himself by affirming his rights to do as he had done. He reasoned, "If she is going to get paid in this line of work, she should learn to do it right!" Upon leaving he left a penny tip, saying, "She will remember me and do better next time."

Later at home the man gathered his study guides for a home Bible study he was to teach. Another member of the congregation had set up the study with the new family in town. He and his friend were greeted at the door by the young husband who said, "Please be patient and understanding with my wife if she appears upset tonight. This was her first day on her new job and she had a difficult time. An uncaring, insulting customer totally humiliated her."

A few minutes later, as they walked back to the car, the question kept popping in his mind, "Was it really worth it? Was it worth losing my temper and exercising my rights?"

Whether or not the events of this story happened as reported is not what should be emphasized. But, how many likenesses to this story have we experienced! How often have the words of James hammered in our minds, "If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God . . . is this . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world" (1:26, 27)! Let us never forget the words of Moses in Numbers 32:23 "be sure your sin will find you out."

The Bible



Bobby Key

Many today are trying to by-pass the Bible and the church and go directly to Christ. They believe in subjective and experimental religion and have little regard for the religion of the Book. One young preacher said: "I can not see why you make such a fuss over the Bible, after all it can't take you to

heaven." I never knew the Bible claimed to take people to heaven, and I have never heard any student of the Bible make such a claim. If the Bible could take us to heaven most everybody would make it, for nearly everyone has a copy of the Bible -- some have several copies. The truth of the matter is the Bible is not our saviour, but it points to Jesus Christ who is our Saviour. The Bible cannot take one to heaven, but it can show him the way to get there!

The truth of the matter is the Bible is not our saviour, but it points to Jesus Christ who is our Saviour. The Bible cannot take one to heaven, but it can show him the way to get there!

We must know God to be saved: one cannot know God apart from the Bible. To be saved one must come to know Jesus Christ; that he is God's Son; that he lived a sinless life; that he died on the cross for our sins; that he arose from the grave on

the words that were spoken became frozen. The problem with that was that when it warmed up in the spring, the people had to listen to their words. Words of love would not be difficult to hear as they might thaw, but what of words of criticism, lies, words that were spoken too rashly and words of profanity -- who would wish to listen? The power of the tongue, for either good or evil, for praise or criticism, often is discussed by inspired men. David understood the power of the tongue when he said, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress" (Psalm 17:3). Further he said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle" (Psalm 39:1). David spent much time escaping from the wrath of King Saul and knew well that workers of iniquity "whet their tongue like a sword" (Psalm 64:3). Even knowing that Saul was evil, David would not appeal to "my rights" and bring any harm to "the Lord's anointed."

Solomon called a wholesome tongue a "tree of life" (Proverbs 15:4). He understood the power of words as he wrote, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" and "whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from trouble" (Proverbs 18:21; 21:23).

Jesus said "Hear and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man . . . out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man" (Matthew 15:10, 11; 18, 19).

Paul said that both our mind and mouth are to be used to glorify God (Romans 15:5, 6). In Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:11 Paul says that the tongue will eventually confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God. According to the Hebrew writer we are to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (13:15). All too often we like Isaiah must confess that we are a people of unclean lips and live in the midst of people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5, 6).

Read the following story of a failure to control

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE



In the Home,
In the Church,
In Business . . . *Am I*

DEPENDABLE?

The Bible

Continued From Page 2

the morning of the third day and that he ascended to be at God's right hand to intercede for his people. It is impossible to know these things apart from the Bible. No one will be saved without knowing the truth about salvation through Christ. Without the Bible we could never know "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). One must know the truth to be saved -- the word of God is truth (John 17:17).

There is nothing an individual needs to believe which is not revealed in the Scriptures. There is nothing we need to practice to please God and honor Christ that is not given us in the Bible. There is not a virtue the Bible does not uphold, and there is not a vice it does not condemn.

The kind of living that pleases the Lord must be directed by his word (Jeremiah 10:23). If one is to win in this battle against temptation, he must know what the will of the Lord is. No one can live right accidentally. No one can live right by following the philosophies of men. The only way we can live right is to follow divine instructions. Many a person has been kept from sin because the word of God was in his heart. Never underestimate the power of the Good Book. You never outgrow your need for the Bible. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6). There are certain things we can know by studying

the natural world around us; however, truth gained from the natural world will not save our souls. Scientific truth has no power to convert people. One may study every book written by man and still be lost in the day of judgment. Only a knowledge of revealed truth, that revealed through holy men of old, has the power of converting the soul of man.

There is nothing an individual needs to believe



Jerry Jenkins

Recently I read of a man who was traveling in rural Oklahoma when he ran out of gas. He went to a nearby farmhouse to call a service station, but the farmer insisted on taking him to town, bringing him back, and even staying until the car was running again. The indebted man offered the farmer ten dollars, but the farmer shook his head. When the traveler insisted the farmer replied: "Look, Mister, I feel good about helping you. If I took your money, you'd be buying that feeling back from me . . . and it's not for sale.

Money can not purchase a number of things. George H. Lorimer, reminds us, "Money can not buy friendship -- friendship must be earned. Money can not buy a clear conscience -- square dealing is the price for it. Money can not buy happiness -- happiness is a mental attitude and one can be happy in a cottage or in a mansion. Money can not buy sunsets, singing birds and the music in the wind -- these are as free as the air we breathe.

which is not revealed in the Scriptures. There is nothing we need to practice to please God and honor Christ that is not given us in the Bible. There is not a virtue the Bible does not uphold, and there is not a vice it does not condemn. Revealed truth is adapted perfectly to the needs of man. It is an unerring guide from earth to heaven.

--324 17th S.W., Miami, Oklahoma 74354.

Not For Sale

Money can not buy peace -- peace is the result of a constructive philosophy of life. Money can not buy character -- a character is what we are when we are alone with ourselves in the dark. It is good to have money and the things it can buy; but is good too, to check up once in a while and make sure you have not lost the things money can not buy." Happiness is "not for sale." Many in our materialistic society feel that happiness is some stop at a beautiful station in life, or the sights along the road; but the Lord shows that it is found in neither, but is the attitude of the traveler. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11, 12). The happiness that you have surely is not for sale.

The relationship with the Lord must not be for sale. When man dies he is buried in an empty coffin. You can not take on the exit side of the grave paper proof of your CD's, Stock Portfolio, or your listing with Dunn and Bradstreet. What counts is, "Is God my Father and am I pleasing to

Continued On Page 4

No Pattern For Worship???

Continued From Page 1

liberty not given to us. Not everything that one must do to be saved is found in one passage of scripture. But we are to take all the Bible says concerning the subject and make proper application. This we have done through the years concerning the great commission and the cases of conversions. We realize that one is to hear and believe the gospel, repent of sins, confess faith in Christ and be baptized (Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46; Acts 2:38 8:37). Not all of these are found in one passage, yet, do they not establish a pattern of God's plan for man's salvation. If not, why not?

The same may be said of worship. We sing in worship because of such passages as Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Would any dare remove singing from worship? If not, why not? Would it not be because of such passages? These passages give us authority to sing in worship. They become the reason for how we worship.

We sing in worship because of such passages as Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Would any dare remove singing from worship? If not, why not? Would it not be because of such passages? These passages give us authority to sing in worship. They become the reason for how we worship.

We pray in the assemblies. Are such prayers authorized? Surely Acts 2:42 gives us such authority. Do we have something not authorized in the worship when we pray? But do we find the authorization for such in Ephesians 5:19 or Colossians 3:16? No, but in Acts 2:42 we find authority for it. Which of the five avenues of worship would one remove? On what basis would it be eliminated? Would it be as the case of this study has set forth, because not all those items of worship are found in the same scripture or example?" It is plain and simple to see that if one would eliminate any of the items of worship, then on the same basis we could do the same with God's plan of salvation. If not, why not?

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It's Really No Surprise!



Jerri Manasco

Religion, at least that which is known as Christianity, is presently in crisis! Attitudes are not conducive to the practice of Christian teachings and principles. Churches are losing members. Structured worship services, structured religious thinking and organized churches are being forsaken by the masses. All kinds of religious leaders are filled with anxiety over the trends! However, such anxiety is really worthless when one recalls that the very cause of the exodus is the very teaching of many of the churches! "How is that" you may say.

Whereas the official teaching of a denomination

Not For Sale

Continued From Page 3

Him?"

Christian friends are not for sale. Rich indeed is the man who has a friend that "sticketh closer" than a brother. A genuine friend will be with you in times of joy and occasions of rejoicing, but also he will walk along side of you in times of disappointment and when your world is caving in.

Our hope is not for sale. Recently when a dear brother went to be with the Lord, I was again reminded of the value of hope. Paul stated: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (I Thessalonians 4:1; 3, 14).

In a culture that is so conscious of the power of buying and selling we must remember that truly some things are just simply not for sale.

In a culture that is so conscious of the power of buying and selling we must remember that truly some things are just simply not for sale. Let us be guided by Jehovah and praise Him for all he has done for us. Let us pray with David, "Thine, O LORD, (is) the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all (that is) in the heaven and in the earth (is) thine); thine (is) the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor (come) of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand (is) power and might; and in thine hand (it is) to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name" (I Chronicles 29:11-13).

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is that the church is not important, why be disturbed when those members finally start practicing what has been preached to them! When members have been told that the church is essentially nothing but a secondary convenience, those who have been doing the teaching should rejoice that their members are paying attention and obeying their instructions. However, we know that the church is important! The church was purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28), is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18) and that the church is the body of the saved (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23). The church revealed in the New Testament is that which the Lord promised to build and did build according to the eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:8-11). When anything short of this is taught, why be surprised when people finally take to heart what they have been hearing?

If church leaders put stress on social issues and political corruption and teach that Christians must be aggressively involved (even in less than peaceful demonstrations) in "contemporary issues" (???), none should be surprised when some members leave the church to join some "cause." Yes, Jesus had, and has a cause -- the cause of righteousness and truth. He came to bear witness to the truth (John 18:36, 37) and to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus came to turn sinners from their course of sin and ruin. Our mission is to preach the gospel. When gospel principles are believed, obeyed and applied, problems take care of themselves.

If church leaders and preachers criticize formal structure in the church, they should not be alarmed when people develop an almost irreverent attitude toward God himself! The Lord's church has come under attack because of our insistence upon New Testament order for God's church. Calling attention to the pattern of God has caused some to cry, "Cold Formality!" When we call our adherence to the "form of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13), we are called formalistic, legalistic and traditionalistic. The ultimate fruit of this will be a generation of people who will have no respect for any authority. We should not be surprised at the natural fruit of such seed!

Calling attention to the pattern of God has caused some to cry, "Cold Formality!" When we call for adherence to the "form of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13), we are called formalistic, legalistic and traditionalistic. The ultimate fruit of this will be a generation of people who will have no respect for any authority.

When people teach that it does not matter what one believes or to what church one belongs, those

teachers have no reason to be upset if their members find a doctrine they like better or a church that offers more for their personal fulfillment. When preachers teach that people need to find a doctrine that gives them comfort, why be disturbed when their members chose an ultra strict doctrine or a less stringent one? After all, consistency demands that they not speak negatively of the newly discovered doctrinal dimensions.

However, we know that it does make a difference what one believes: God is pleased ONLY WITH THE TRUTH (John 8:32; 17:17). If one teaches that it doesn't matter what a person believes, he cannot consistently hinder one from following that advice! If liberal thinking and teaching is all right one should not be disturbed when people grow dissatisfied with fundamental values. Where liberalism undermines the Bible teaching on male and female roles, why be surprised when a generation of young people is woefully confused about who and what they are. If such teaching becomes common, we should not be surprised when the home experiences even more problems and churches are wrecked by rebellion which is fostered by "liberation" teachings! Those who do such teaching should not be surprised at the results that their teaching will most certainly have.

If a generation is taught that the Bible is really just a "love letter" from God and not intended to be a hard and fast rule, we should not be surprised when our young people lose sight of the meaning of what it is to be a Christian. After all, if the Bible is not a book of revealed law and if it is not to be a pattern, then how can you impart any hard and fast rules for life?? How can you say that anything is wrong?? How can you consistently say that anything is right?

We are not surprised that many have lost confidence in "organized religion" because of the sexually perverse activities and mercenary motives of some so-called "Christian leaders." In fact, Peter told us centuries ago that such conduct invariably results in the truth being evil spoken (II Peter 2:1-3f).

We should be greatly saddened but NOT SURPRISED when people turn from the truth and cease standing for the validity of the "Old Paths." It will be no surprise when those fed from the liberal tables reveal their spiritual leanness! Brethren, will it not be too late to cry "wolf" when people are practicing what they have been taught all along!

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Words Of Truth

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

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Faith That Saves

Kenneth McClain

The Hebrew writer says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). One would get very little opposition from the religious world about the necessity of having faith to please God. The question should be asked, "What kind of faith will please God?" James 2:17-26 speaks of a dead faith. Surely that kind of faith will not please God. There are those who say that faith only is all that is necessary to please God. In James 2:24 we read ". . . how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." So the "faith only" doctrine is a false doctrine. In Hebrews 11:1 we read, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The word faith is defined: "belief, trust, confidence" (Webster). What does it mean to have faith that saves?

We must have faith in Christ. Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Further, Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God believe also in me" (John 14:1). In Acts 8:37 the eunuch made the good confession by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

In Romans 10:9, 10 we read: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." What does it mean to have faith in Christ or to confess him before men? It means that we believe in Him and trust him when he says that He is the Son of God, Master and Ruler of our lives as our Savior, the anointed One. If we refuse to believe this we have no hope of being saved (John 3:18-36).

What does it mean to have faith in Christ or to confess him before men? It means that we believe in Him and trust Him when he says that He is the Son of God, Master and Ruler of our lives as our Savior, the anointed One. If we refuse to believe this we have no hope of being saved (John 3:18-36).

We must have the kind of faith that God's word produces. Man cannot always go with his feelings when it comes to salvation. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Only God's word can produce saving faith (Romans 10:17). The devil knows that only God's word can produce the kind of faith that saves, and that is why he takes the word out of man's heart (Luke 8:11, 12). It is also the devil that blinds the minds of men to the glorious gospel of Christ in order that they will be lost.

We must have an obedient faith. Samuel said in the long ago, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22). Romans 6:16 says, "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?"

There are many people who confess faith in God but fail to obey Him. John 12:42, 43 says, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of

the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Romans 10:9, 10 teaches us that we must confess Christ. James 2:19 says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." For one to believe that there is one God is well if he does not stop there. If one stops there he is no better than the devils who believe.

Faith that saves will always act as God directs, will attain the Christian graces and endure until the end (Hebrews 11; II Peter 1:5-12; Revelation 2:10). Do you have the kind of faith that will save your soul?

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203.

The Result Of Lying: Disaster



Victor M. Eskew

"Lie not one to another," were the words of the apostle Paul in the Colossian epistle (Colossians 3:9). Instead, we are to "speak truth every man with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25). The reason for this is because as God's children, we have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put

on the new man (Colossians 3:9-10).

Sadly, though, far too many have not given heed to this divine instruction. Lying plagues our society. It can be found in the home, the school,

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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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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Newby Herman Neutics



Ray Hawk

It never ceases to amaze me that folks who ought to know better, do not. If any group of people ought to understand the issue best, it should be Christians. The Bible was given by Jehovah as a guide to man.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

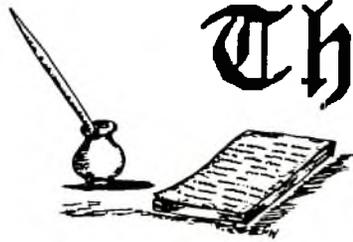
for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17).

The word of God not only protects us from doing evil if we will use it as did Jesus (Matthew 4:4), but it is our offensive weapon to convert others (Acts 2:37; 7:54). The devil knows that if he can drive a wedge between the Christian and the Bible, he can destroy him.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all,

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The Editor's Pen



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Man Cannot Live Wrong And Die Right!



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

In Luke 16:26 Abraham told a rich man who was in torment, "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." The rich man had already learned the truth that man cannot live wrong and die right. Multitudes

of people are expecting to live for Satan and self while on the earth, but to be justified when facing the Lord in Judgment Day.

It is a sad thing for one to live and die unforgiven by God, but sadder still for that one to live in the hire of Satan and expect to be rewarded with the laborers of the Lord. Many seem to have the attitude that "all's well that ends well," without realizing that as one lives he dies, and as he dies he will be judged. After all, the way man lives upon this earth determines what direction he takes when he leaves the earth. Paul told the Galatians that "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Man cannot live wrong and die right!

Solomon said "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). That being true, a nation consists of the individuals within that nation, therefore, if righteousness exalteth a nation, it also will exalt the individual. Sin is a reproach to any people, and any nation (people) is composed of these within the nation, therefore sin is a reproach to any person. Man cannot live wrong and die right!

The high cost of low living is seen within the lives of those who choose to follow the wrong course. Did not the course of Adam and Eve bring havoc to the human race? Their actions brought upon the human race the sentence of death, separation from God. The high cost of low living was evident

in the destruction of the cities of the plains (Genesis 19:23-25). Even the wife of righteous Lot paid the price of wrong living when she disobeyed the commands of the angels and was turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Even in the New Testament we see the price paid by Ananias and Sapphira who lied to the Lord and forfeited their lives (Acts 5:1-10). Do not be deceived, man cannot mock God because man reaps what he sows; man just cannot live wrong and die right.

Heaven is promised to those who live right, who follow the commands of the Lord by living and teaching so as to receive the blessings of the faithful. In Revelation 14:13 we read "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." The Psalmist said "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). It was because of a wonderful relationship, based on his obedience to the Lord, that Paul could say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day . . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not for me only, but unto ALL THEM THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING" (II Timothy 1:12; 4:7, 8).

The bottom line is this, one cannot die in a state in which he has never lived. One cannot die in a saved relationship with the Lord and hear him say "well done thy good and faithful servant" IF HE LIVED CONTINUALLY IN AN UNSAVED RELATIONSHIP. You just cannot live wrong and die right, regardless of how much one might wish! You cannot die IN CHRIST unless you have entered into Christ on the living side of death. The Hebrew writer said that Christ is the author of salvation to them THAT OBEY HIM (Hebrews 5:9).

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The Result Of Lying: Disaster

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business, government, and, yes, even in the church. This sin branches out in many forms: deception, hypocrisy, false witnessing, false doctrine, flattery, idolatry, cheating, white lies, and stretching the truth. Lying is so common place with some that they do not even realize that they are telling them.

Sadly, though, far too many have not given heed to this divine instruction. Lying plagues our society. It can be found in the home, the school, business, government, and, yes even in the church.

We desperately need to be reminded of the disaster connected with lying. Three persons can be disastrously affected by the utterance or practice of falsehood. First, the liar himself will come to ruin. In Psalm 52, the psalmist wrote about the "mighty man" (v. 1). In verse 3, he described him as one who loved "lying rather than to speak righteousness." Sure destruction was to come upon him. "God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living" (v. 5).

In Jeremiah 29:21, we learn of the disaster which was to befall Ahab and Zedekiah, two false prophets, who spoke lies to Israel. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Maaseiah the son of Messiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchanezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes." Physical death was the disaster these two men met due to the false message they proclaimed.

Physical death was also the end of two liars in the New Testament. "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things" (Acts 5:1-5). Sapphira's lie and wicked end are found in verses 7-10. Truly, disaster came upon these two who uttered falsehood.

Not all liars, however, receive a disastrous end in this life. Most individuals know of those who lie continually and never seem to get caught. These individuals may never come to ruin in this life, but in the world to come they will meet an awful end. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the

abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). Hell with all its fury will be the final abode of all liars. When in that place for only a second, they will know disaster has struck.

Hell with all its fury will be the final abode of all liars. When in that place for only a second, they will know disaster has struck.

Second, the Scriptures reveal that those who hear and heed a lie must also face disaster. The best known illustration which still effects all men today involves the first couple, Adam and Eve. The beautiful Eve gave ear to Satan's lie. She yielded thereunto, the consequences of her actions are still being felt and seen by all humanity. Listen to the lie. Notice that Satan only changed God's words by one word. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

Another example of one who succumbed to death because of a lie which he heard and believed was the young prophet of I Kings 13. The Lord had charged this man of God, saying, "Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest" (I Kings 13:9). An old prophet,

however, came to him and said, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water" (v. 18). Although convincing, the words were a lie. Because of his obedience to a lie, the hand of death overshadowed him. Instead of a joyful reunion with his loved ones, he was met and slain by a lion in the way (I Kings 13:24).

Finally, one can be a third part of a lie, and be adversely affected by the lie. One may not be the liar himself. He may not be the hearer of the lie. However, he may have a lie told about him to another. This lie could destroy his name, character and reputation. His home life might be wrecked. His career might come to a halt. Sorrow and misery might settle with him for many years because of a lie uttered by another. In Proverbs 26:28, the writer of wisdom said: "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it . . ." Hatred does not care about the hurt it brings. This writer personally knows the heartache which must be endured when lies are spread by wicked and corrupt individuals.

Dear readers, let us each be committed to speaking the truth. Let us not become like unto Satan (John 8:44). Remember, disaster looms upon the end of every lie that is uttered. Innocent, as well as, guilty parties can be the victims. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man the truth with his neighbor. . ." (Ephesians 4:25).

--Rt. 1 Box 39-B1, Pocahontas, TN 38061.

Newby Herman Neutics

taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:11-17).

The word of God not only protects us from doing evil if we will use it as did Jesus (Matthew 4:4), but it is our offensive weapon to convert others (Acts 2:37; 7:54). The devil knows that if he can drive a wedge between the Christian and the Bible, he can destroy him.

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:11, 12).

It is disheartening to find that some Christians have been duped into believing the devil's lie and have rejected the scriptures as God's guide book for us to live, work, worship, and be saved by. One religious magazine now carries a cartoon called Herman Neutic to ridicule those who believe we should use God's word as a pattern for our authority in religion. The name of the cartoon character is taken from the word hermeneutic. This

is a large word that means "the study of the methodological principles of interpretation (as of the Bible)" Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, p. 389).

Image Magazine says of its new cartoon, "Each month, brother Neutic will help us take a tongue in check look at ourselves" (Vol. 6, No. 1, Jan/Feb 1990, p 11).

When God specifies a matter, that eliminates everything else in that category. For example, Jehovah told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood. When God specified gopher wood, that eliminated all other kinds of wood. God did not have to specifically condemn all other kinds of wood for Noah to understand that he was not to use them (Genesis 6:14). When God instructed Nadab and Abihu in building the fire for the censer, they knew how it was to be prepared. However, they offered "strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1). When God specified what they were to do, that eliminated all the other ways or kinds of fire they could have offered. When they offered a

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"Something Was Left Out"

James W. Watkins

A California dam suddenly gave way under terrific pressure. The torrent of water raced down the valley, wrecking homes and taking a ghastly toll of life. The engineer who built the dam was dismayed. He found his original plans and specifications of the dam and went over them carefully to discover any possible flaw. After a careful survey he reported that there had been no engineering mistakes. He declared that if the dam had been built according to specifications it would have stood. "But," he added, "evidently something was left out."

There is security in God's word. "Every word of God is tried: he is a shield unto them that take

Newby Herman Neutics

Continued From Page 3

different kind of fire, they failed to obey Jehovah. He destroyed them for their disobedience (Leviticus 10:2). Example after example could be given from scripture to show this. We ought to give heed to what God has said (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

Those who espouse the new hermeneutic do not believe the New Testament was given by God as a pattern for worship, work, and for some, salvation. They believe the Bible is only a love letter.

The cartoon Herman Neutic is following a philosophy that has been dubbed the new hermeneutics (Newby Herman Neutic). Those who espouse the new hermeneutic do not believe the New Testament was given by God as a pattern for worship, work, and for some, salvation. They believe the Bible is only a love letter. Love letters do not give commandments! These brethren use, as their standard of authority, ridicule of and disdain for proof texting. Rather than answer arguments that have withstood the best that sectarians could throw against them, they resort to ridicule to belittle anyone that believes in giving book, chapter, and verse as his authority. They want us to zombie-like, lay aside Biblical reasoning and accept their rational which is based upon belittling, disdain, and a desire to be like the intelligentsia around us. They cannot prove that book, chapter, and verse authority is wrong once they would have to stoop to practicing what they so vocally abhor. They articulate against apostolic example and necessary implication but want us to swallow their examples and implications as our new authority. May we never leave a "thus saith the Lord." May we always speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11).

--90 McDaniel, Jackson, TN 38305.

refuge in him" (Proverbs 30:5). "For no word from God shall be void of power" (Luke 1:37). ". . . for himself hath said, I will in no wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). God's word has power to save our souls (Romans 1:16). His word can turn us "from darkness to light," and give us "remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18). It is, however, a shocking fact that the dam broke against certain "believers in judgment" with terrible and eternal consequences. These "believers" entreated the judge: "Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy by thy name, and by thy name do many mighty works" (Matthew 7:22)? Yet, the Lord will say, ". . . depart . . . ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23).

What happened? If we again carefully survey the blueprint, God's word, taking great pains to examine every word carefully, we will find that there have been no engineering mistakes. The specifications are perfect and very simple. We must conclude that something had been left out. When we observe the present status of so called "christendom" we readily understand the problem. Professed believers are practicing convenience (sprinkling, pouring, instead of New Testament

There is security in God's word. "Every word of God is tried: he is a shield unto them that take refuge in him" (Proverbs 30:5). "For no word from God shall be void of power" (Luke 1:37). ". . . for himself hath said, I will in no wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

baptism, etc.) instead of obeying God's word. They are engaging in entertainment (instrumental music in worship, bands, etc.) rather than worshipping God (John 4:24). They belong to religious institutions unknown to and unauthorized by the word of God (Matthew 15:8, 9, 13).

What is being left out? Respect for divine authority. Men are rejecting God's commandment and holding fast their traditions (Mark 7:6-8).

--305 West Church St., Lewisburg, TN 37091.

The New Birth



John Gipson

Nicodemus should have known better.

You might expect the average person to be confused. But not Nicodemus. He is a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel.

As a teacher of God's people Nicodemus would be expected to have a working knowledge of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

Surely Nicodemus had read and studied the book of Ezekiel. In this book God promised:

"A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."

The new birth is not a physical birth. It is brought about by the working of the Holy Spirit as God's word is proclaimed. When one is baptized into Christ (the birth of the water), he receives the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Ezekiel 36:26, 27

This prophecy of a new heart, and a new spirit within, is followed by the vision of the valley of dry bones recounted in Ezekiel 37.

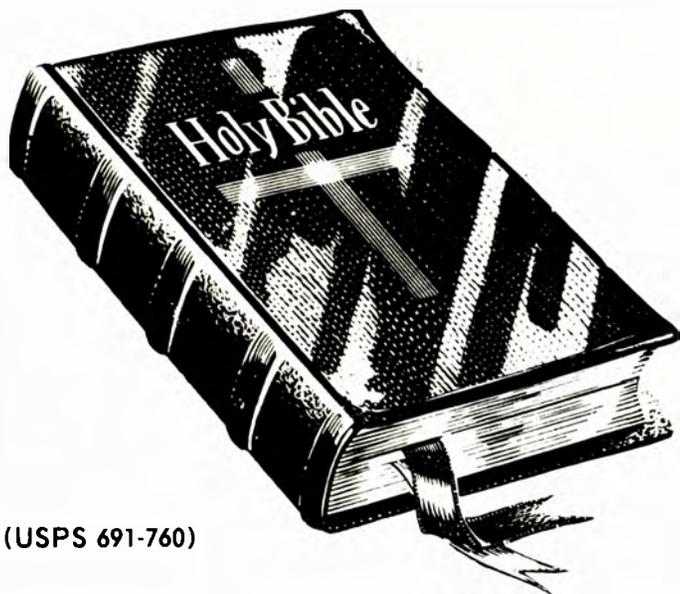
Ezekiel saw a valley filled with bones. He was asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel wasn't sure so he answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest." It was then that Ezekiel was told to prophesy to these bones, and tell them to hear the word of the Lord. When he did what God told him to do the bones came together, and the breath came into them, and they lived. It was as God said, "And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live . . ." (Ezekiel 37:14).

Nicodemus should have been on familiar ground when Jesus told him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). And again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

The new birth is not a physical birth. It is brought about by the working of the Holy Spirit as God's word is proclaimed. When one is baptized into Christ (the birth of the water), he receives the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The individual becomes a new creature. He had God's spirit within, and he has entered the kingdom of God.

--823 W. Sixth St., Little Rock, AR.



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Words Of Truth

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

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NUMBER 26

Are There Always Two Sides (Equally Wrong)?



Joe E. Galloway

Often when wrong doing has been pointed out on the part of an individual or a group, someone is heard to say, "There are always two sides to every matter." Even without any evidence of wrong doing on the part of one, when it is known that the other party has sinned, one is suggesting that blame

must be placed on both parties. This statement is sometimes made to turn attention and condemnation away from the sinful action and the guilty party. The rationale is that by suggesting that there is wrong on both sides, possibly there will be no further attempt to correct the wrong, nor to censure the guilty.

There are instances when both parties to a disagreement or sinful action are wrong. Both may be wrong in teaching, in action, in attitude or in any combination thereof. All wrongdoing should be corrected! One is not justified in doing wrong because another did the first wrong or the greatest wrong. Regardless of what one has said or done to us, we still must do right to them. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:44, 45). We are to "recompense to no man evil for evil," and are told "avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath" because vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:17, 19).

Yet, it is possible for one side to be completely blameless when difference and problems arise. When Paul withstood Peter "to the face" at Antioch, it was not a matter of there being "two sides to every difference." Peter was wrong! Read Galatians 2:11-14. When John was imprisoned for

telling Herod that his marriage to Herodias was not lawful, John was completely in the right! Herod was completely wrong! It would have been ludicrous to have suggested: "There are always two sides! If John had handled this situation more tactfully, this would not have happened. John helped bring this on himself."

Several times we have known of faithful Christians being divorced from a companion. In connection with this we have heard some make a statement like this: "I do not know what all was involved, but she must not have been the wife she should have been, for it takes two to have such problems!" How unfair and unwarranted is such a statement! There are many godly women who do everything within their power to please their husbands, while working to improve and praying for his spiritual condition. The husband, though, may not be influenced by the godly influence of such a wife. He is affected by the ungodly advice and attitudes of his friends. He may decide to turn from his faithful wife to other ungodly pursuits, including another woman. All this can also be said of some godly husbands, with wives who are more interested in pleasing themselves than in pleasing the Lord! How dare we stand aloof in such cases and suggest that there is bound to be fault with both in every such situation!!

There are currently several false teachers among us, receiving full fellowship from many congregations. This involves such matters as teaching error regarding instrumental music, premillennialism, divorce and remarriage, God's grace, the Bible being our pattern, fellowship, and the plan of salvation. Often when some faithful brother has taken a false brother to task, one has been heard to say: "He was out of place making such a public issue of this. I am sure if you knew all that he teaches you would find that he also teaches some things with which you do not agree. All of us hold some error. You know, none of us knows all the truth." Again, the implication is that there is always wrong on both sides of any matter

or difference.

Is there no difference between truth and error? Can we not learn of that difference with certainty (I John 5:6)? Do we not have an obligation to earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3; Philippians 1:17, 28)? While none is sinlessly perfect, and none has a flawless understanding of all truth, is it not still possible for us to be acceptable to God and to correct wrongdoing and false teaching? Galatians 6:1 suggests that it is!

In about every congregation some serious problems will occasionally arise. It may be a well-defined rift within the membership. Even though one group may be definitely in the wrong in upholding gross immorality, false teaching, or in rebelling against proper authority, we still hear such remarks as: "There is bound to be wrong on both sides. 'It takes two to tango.'" Many times the cause of truth and right has been weakened by such statements and attitudes.

We need to be sure of what is being taught or practiced before we oppose or condone a party in a difference. Then we need to make certain we know what God says about that matter, being careful not to decide right or wrong on the basis of friendship or other subjective considerations. Whatever we do or say should be done to help correct a wrong situation, save the wrongdoer, and encourage truth and right. It is never right to simply act as a meddler in other people's matters (I Peter 4:15). With these considerations in mind, let us always stand for truth and right, and against all that is wrong! To do otherwise is to work for Satan (Luke 11:23).

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greenville, TN 37743.

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Light!



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

A story is told of an old blind man who would carry a lighted lantern everywhere he went at night. When someone would inquire why a blind man would carry a lantern, he would reply, "To help keep others from stumbling over me."

What a lesson for Christian people! The Psalmist declared "The Lord is my light" (Psalm 27:1). Solomon said "the path of the just is the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). Paul said "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Is it any wonder then that Christ would say unto his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world . . . let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16)?

The Christian is a positive force for good in the world as he reflects the image of Christ, not desiring that anyone stumble in this world of darkness. This is especially true when considering that we would not want anyone to stumble because of our example. Paul often addressed the topic of living so as not to be a stumblingblock or cause of offense (Romans 9:32, 33; 14:13, 20, 21; 16:17; I Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:32; II Corinthians 6:3; 11:7; Philippians 1:10).

In Matthew 17:24-27 Jesus teaches a lesson by his example. Those in Capernaum who were charged with collecting the tribute money asked of Peter, "Doth not your master pay tribute (the temple tax)" (verse 24)? In an effort intended not to offend the authorities, Jesus sent Peter fishing, instructing him to take the money from the mouth of the first fish he caught and pay the tax. Jesus was making sure that he set a right example for all concerned. He did nothing that would hurt, mislead or trip another. What a great principle for all who would follow Christ today?

Paul mentioned the works of the flesh in Galatians 5. In Ephesians 5, he named them and commanded that they "not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (verse 3). Paul not only commanded that we abstain from such practices and maintain a pure life, but he was a great example of such a life. Before Felix he would aver that his conscience was "void of offense toward God, and toward man" (Acts 24:16).

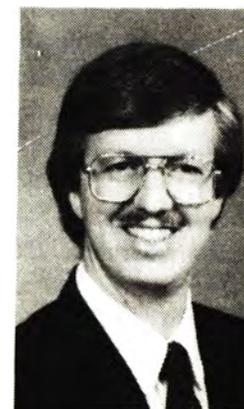
As people were watching Jesus, they are

watching you and others. What do they see? On the second day of a fishing trip in Mexico, one of the men asked the Mexican guide for a drink from his cooler. The guide handed him a soft-drink and said with a smile, "You are Hallelujahs." This was his way of saying they were Christians. When asked how he knew, the guide said, "There is no beer in the cooler." We must remember that people are always "looking at our coolers"! Also they look in our magazine racks, our bookshelves and many other areas of our lives. The judgments they make are based on what they see in our lives!! Remember the question of Isaiah to Hezekiah, "What have they seen in thine house" (II Kings 20:15)?

We should always endeavor to be "void of offense toward God and man" as was Paul and never give "occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" against God's people (Acts 24:16; I Timothy 5:14).

The world does not expect Christians to be perfect, but they certainly expect us to be different from the rest of the world. We must practice what we preach as a means of drawing men to Jesus, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. Let us ever be the LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

Conducting The Lord's Supper



Tim Rice

The late and lamented T. B. Larimore once said, "So far as my limited observation shows, men make more mistakes at the Lord's table, where they frequently talk and pray, instead of simply giving thanks, as the Bible authorizes, than anywhere else in the service of the Lord."

This statement by a saintly and devoted preacher of the New Testament plan makes us "sit up and take notice." There are several mistakes I have seen and heard with reference to the observance of the Lord's Supper. We realize that presiding at the Lord's table is a pressure situation for many who are not accustomed to making public presentations. Also, we appreciate the fact that every time one makes a mistake in that situation it is totally unintentional. We do not know how God views

Continued On Page 3

This We Believe!



Johnny Ramsey

We have no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible. This position, held by the churches of Christ, is basic to New Testament Christianity (Colossians 3:16, 17). It is a refreshing stand in the midst of the sectarian strife and denominational maze of the religious world. Disdaining earthly headquarters, church

manuals, human creeds, and spiritual hierarchy, this pristine and clarion call takes us back 1900 years to the fountain of Truth.

Christ promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18) and the apostles, as ambassadors of the Lord (II Corinthians 5:20), carried out the marvelous plan of Heaven. Since Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28), the body of Christ is subject to Him (Ephesians 5:24). Therefore, in worship, doctrine, morals -- Yes, all facets of divine life -- we must honor His authority (Matthew 28:18) and follow the mandates and precepts of the Divine will. The Son of God, as head of the church, rules from the realm of glory, through the all-sufficient Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16, 17) to direct us in the spiritual pursuits of life. Human hands do not touch the affairs of the kingdom of God (Daniel 2:44). Councils, conferences and synods will never convene to decide policy for Christ's church, because the Bible carefully instructs the servants of the Lord.

No theological seminary trains preachers of the gospel, because Christ commanded His servants centuries ago "to preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). We will worship God daily

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Conducting The Lord's Supper

Continued From Page 2

mistakes at the Lord's table. However, we do know that it is worship, and Jesus said that "they that worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). It is for this reason that we offer these thoughts on the conducting of the Lord's supper.

One rule of propriety in conducting the Lord's supper is to keep it simple. When we note Jesus' establishment of the supper in Matthew 26:26-29, and Paul's review of it in I Corinthians 11:23-25, we see the simplicity with which the Lord offered the bread and fruit of the vine. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. He took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to the disciples. These basic simple elements are all that one has to remember when presiding at the Lord's table.

One rule of propriety in conducting the Lord's supper is to keep it simple. When we note Jesus' establishment of the supper in Matthew 26:26-29, and Paul's review of it in I Corinthians 11:23-25, we see the simplicity with which the Lord offered the bread and fruit of the vine. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. He took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to the disciples.

What are some mistakes that are frequently made at the Lord's table? It is a mistake not to offer the bread first. It is a mistake to offer one prayer, as Jesus offered one for each item he presented to the apostles. It is a mistake to fail to thank the Lord for each item. In our prayer we should actually say, "We thank Thee for this bread . . ." of, "We thank Thee for this fruit of the vine . . ." It is not necessary, but not incorrect, to include in the prayer the meaning of the Lord's supper. But remember, it is necessary to give thanks for the bread and fruit of the vine.

Brother Guy N. Woods notes it is best to omit the phrase "the broken body of our Lord" from our prayer at the Lord's table. While it seems that the Bible teaches Jesus' body was broken in I Corinthians 11:24 in the King James Version, the best manuscripts do not contain the word "broken" in the original. Hence the American Standard Version says, "This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me." When we compare this passage with Psalm 34:20 and John 19:31-36, which give the prophecy and fulfillment

that not a bone would be broken, we see the wisdom in omitting this phrase.

Also, it is incorrect to say that in the Lord's supper we celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere teaches such, but rather that in the Lord's supper we remember Jesus and proclaim his "death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:24-26).

Further, it might be advisable not to use the word "spill" with reference to the blood of Jesus. While one definition of "spill" is "to shed as in killing or wounding," the primary definition is "to cause or allow to run or fall from a container, especially accidentally or wastefully," which of course is not an accurate description of what happened when Jesus offered his blood as God had planned (Matthew 26:27, 28).

Also, it is incorrect to say that in the Lord's supper we celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere teaches such, but rather that in the Lord's supper we remember Jesus and proclaim his "death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:24-26).

These ideas are offered in the hope that we will have fewer mistakes occurring around the Lord's table and that it will be more meaningful to all.

--108 Greenleaf Drive, Birmingham, AL 35214.

"Happy Is That People Whose God Is The Lord"



Bobby Duncan

There is much unhappiness in this old world. Books on the subject of how to be happy are being multiplied, as are sermons and lectures that deal with that theme. In Psalms 144:15 we find the ingredient that guarantees happiness, and yet it is the ingredient missing in the lives of the great majority of people. "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

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Some think they would be happy if they just had plenty of money, but such is a false notion. There is misery and unhappiness in all economic levels of our society. In fact, sometimes being affluent adds to unhappiness, and there are many very happy people who have little of this world's goods. One cannot say, "Happy is that people whose bank accounts are swollen."

Some think positions of power and prestige

would make them happy. Politicians run for office on platforms which suggest they want to make our city, state, or nation a better place in which to live. No doubt many of them are sincere. But the way some act after they are elected suggests they are interested only in power and prestige, and not in the common good. Out of a desire for power and prestige these sought to be elected to some office, but they often wind up in shame and misery, because power and prestige do not bring

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This We Believe!

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and diligently -- publically and privately -- to pour out the homage of our hearts to our loving Heavenly Father. Reserved for "the first day of the week" will be the special privilege of the Lord's Supper and the contribution where we remember fervently the Saviour's death and give generously to His cause (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1). As we sing praises to our Redeemer we will not add mechanical instruments, for we have no authority from our King for such mundane things.

As we teach others the Lord's way of salvation, we will stress the necessity of believing in Him (John 8:24), repenting of sins (Acts 17:30), and then being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16). Thereafter, we will emphasize the joy and essentiality of living a Christ-centered life (Colossians 3:1-3) of purity (Matthew 5:8), loyalty (Galatians 2:20), and service (Philippians 2:15, 16). At the end of such devotion is Heaven (Titus 1:2). THIS WE TRULY BELIEVE.

--3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

The Smitten Rock, A Type Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

When Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, they were saved from Egyptian bondage. Israel murmured against God and Moses and said, "Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" (Exodus 17:3). The Lord said unto Moses, "Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink" (Exodus 17:5, 6). The apostle Paul said, "that Rock was Christ" (I Corinthians 10:4). Therefore, we would naturally expect an analogy between the smitten rock and Christ.

The rock was smitten that Israel might have water

to drink. There was no substitute for water, and there was no water until the rock was smitten. Then there was an abundant supply of water for all Israel (Exodus 17:5-7). Christ is the fountain of living water (John 4:10-14). When Christ was smitten (crucified) living water flowed freely for all men (Matthew 27:35-54; Luke 2:8-14; John 4:13, 14; 6:35; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 2:9). Prior to the death of Christ, the best that the Jews could offer was animal sacrifices, and thereby remembrance was made of sin year by year (Hebrews 10:1-4). When Jesus died on the cross, His blood was retrospective. That is, it reached back and cleansed all those under the old covenant who obeyed God (Hebrews 9:15). Jesus has, also, brought salvation to all under the Christian age who will obey Him (I Peter 1:2, 18, 19; Revelation 1:5). Thus, the water of life now flows freely to all men (Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:17). Just as there is no substitute for water to sustain life, there is no substitute for Christ's blood that we might have eternal life. When we turn our back upon Christ, our smitten Rock, we have turned our back upon all of our eternal hope. Therefore, Christ and Him

crucified must be preached that all may see the power in the blood.

As a rock stands forth with prominence and unchanging stability, just so Christ stands superior to all kings, priests and angels (Revelation 17:14; 19:16, 17; Hebrews 1:4, 6; 7). Not only is Christ superior to all these, but He is unchangeable (Hebrews 13:8).

The rock was smitten that Israel might have water to drink. There was no substitute for water, and there was no water until the rock was smitten. Then there was an abundant supply of water for all Israel (Exodus 17:5-7). Christ is the fountain of living water (John 4:10-14).

When Moses smote the rock and an abundance of water flowed from the rock, it was then the responsibility of those Israelites to drink that water to receive the benefit. Therefore, salvation by the grace of God is conditional on our part (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Christ is the fountain of living water. The rock has been smitten, and the water of salvation flows freely, but we must drink by obedience to the gospel to be saved (Matthew 7:21-27; Mark 16:16; Luke 6:46-49; Romans 2:8-11; II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:14).

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God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 2:11). God wants all men to be saved (II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:4). God has gone all out to save man (John 3:16). Now the responsibility of man's salvation falls upon man himself. Let none, therefore, be derelict of his own responsibility and fail to drink of the water of life that freely flows for all.

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"Happy Is That People Whose God Is The Lord"

Continued From Page 3

happiness. One cannot say, "Happy is that people who have prestige and power."

Secular education is a wonderful thing, and our existence upon this earth has been greatly blessed by the continued advancements in knowledge and expertise in different fields. But no amount of secular education or accumulation of degrees can guarantee happiness. Laughter may be even more common among the illiterate than it is among the educated; certainly it is as common. One cannot say, "Happy is that people whose secular educational attainments are great."

You see, happiness is not determined by one's academic attainments, the amount of money he has, the kind of house he lives in, the kind of car he drives, the number of people he commands, the number who may know his name, or any other material consideration. True happiness is determined by one's relationship to our Father in heaven.

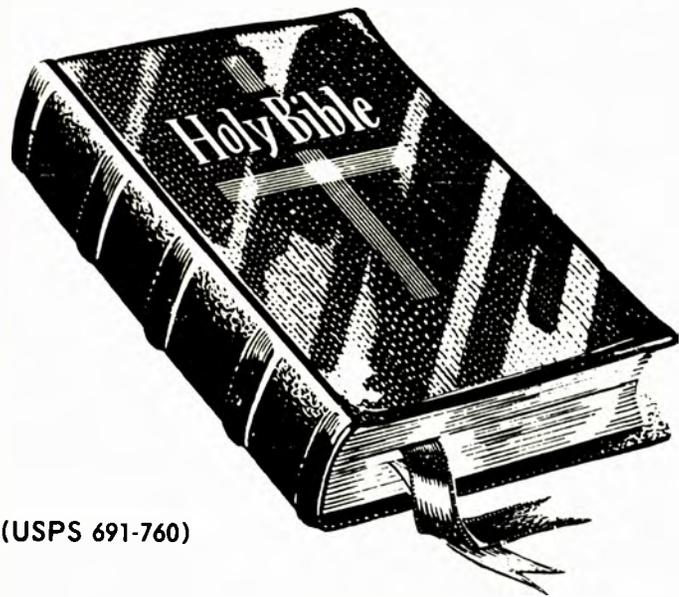
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Isn't it strange that we spend so much of our time and energy in pursuing those things which can never bring happiness, and so little in pursuing that which can. It is even more strange when viewed in the light of Jesus' words in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

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

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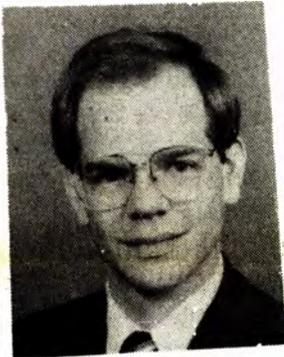
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God Has Done His Part -- Have You?



Brad T. Bromling

How shall man approach the God of the universe? How shall he seek His pleasure and avoid His anger? Clear answers to these vital questions were furnished by Paul. In his letter to the Romans, he insisted that man cannot please God by any religious system of his own devising. Instead, he must approach God in faith. In the Bible, "faith" means taking God at His word -- trusting Him, and completely committing one's self to obeying His will. Contrary to the prevailing sentiment, true faith is based upon a knowledge and acceptance of God's written Word (Romans 10:17). This faith was epitomized in the lives of many Old Testament characters, who are held up as examples for us (Hebrews 11).

Before entering into his detailed discussion of faith, Paul established mankind's universal need for it. His introductory chapter lays the foundational fact that, without God in his life, man is corrupt. In his degenerate condition he is headed toward a destiny that is, at best, terrifying. By focussing attention upon Romans 1:16-32, this article will examine the apostle's description of man's condition and destiny and show that hope is available.

Very few, if any, would contend that the world's current status is ideal. One has only to read Paul's depiction of the Roman world to see that things have not changed over the last 1900 years. Examples of man's inhumanity to man are on every hand. War is an ever-present reality. Somewhere, at every moment of the day, someone is fighting with someone else. Shameful sexual perversions are rampant; innocent men, women, and children are victimized by such deviant behavior. Millions of people continue to serve slavishly the personally elected tyrants called

alcohol, opium, and cocaine. Materialism has so warped the thinking of whole nations that the poor are treated as though they are simply getting what they deserve. Murder, theft, rape, and virtually everything short of absolute anarchy plagues planet Earth; but, why? Paul's answer is essentially this: man has left God out of his life (vs 21). God prepared a beautiful planet upon which He desired mankind to dwell. When it was just right, He created Adam and Eve and placed them into a pristine paradise home. Not long afterwards, they rebelled (see Genesis 1-3), and history reports that, from that time forward, most of man's efforts have concentrated on pushing God out of his life, out of his mind, and out of his world. Many people, driven by pride, think that they possess the answers to life, and presume that God is the product of their own creation. Since God created man with the ability to choose obedience (with its desirable rewards), or disobedience (with its deserved punishments), He allows him to go his own way (vss 24, 26, 28). However, the way man chooses to live this life determines his eternal destiny.

Admitting that man's situation is grim, and that he is responsible for it, the question naturally arises: what is to become of men who spurn God? The terrifying answer is provided by Paul: the wrath of God is held in store for them (vss 18, 32). Although very few details are given, the reality of a coming judgment is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Every man and woman who has ever lived will give an accounting to their Creator for the deeds committed while living upon the Earth (Acts 17:32; II Corinthians 5:10). Jesus Christ will some day descend to the clouds and call everyone from the tombs. Those who have lived in harmony with God's Word will be raised to enjoy eternal delight in heaven, and those who have lived in rebellion to God's Word will be raised to suffer eternal punishment in hell (John 5:28, 29). Is this fair? Abraham answered this question many years ago with another searching question: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25).

The obvious answer is, "Yes!" Paul's agreement with this reasoning is seen in that he calls God's judgment "righteous" (vs 32). While man may struggle to understand the details of eternal judgment, he can be confident that God will do only that which is right. Actually, God has done His part, now man must do his.

Man does not have to flounder in the mire of wickedness. He has within his grasp all the data he needs to come into a harmonious relationship with his Maker. God has revealed this important information in two ways. The primary revelation (i.e., divine disclosure to man) comes to man from the natural world which surrounds him. Paul wrote: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead [divine nature -- BTB] . . ." (vs 20). A cursory examination of stars in the night sky reveals God's majestic power and orderliness. David once wrote: "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament [expanse of heaven -- BTB] shows his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Contemplation of the human ability to reason should drive one to the conclusion that there is a Creator who is rational and intelligent. The intricate design of the human body should cause man to admit: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Even the weather serves as proof that God is. This point was made by Paul before a heathen audience in the city of Lystra: "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). In nearly every direction man turns, he finds evidences of God's revelation. Rebellious effort is required in order for him to overlook it. Paul said that the evidence is so overwhelming that it is inexcusable for a man to claim he is ignorant of God's existence (vs 20).

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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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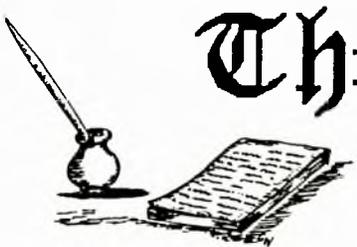
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The Editor's Pen



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Let Us Consider One Another!



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

"And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to 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).

The Hebrew writer teaches us to "consider one another." This teaching is that we should remember one another with reference to the assembling of the saints, yet is it not important to consider one another in the many facets of life's relationship?

We are to encourage one another and to exhort one another, and we may well do this by being assembled together for Bible study and worship. It is true that no specific service is given, but we are just not to forsake the assemblies. The reason is quite obvious, we need the encouragement and stimulation which we can get from being with one another.

The "one another" passages of the New Testament are vital to Christian living. Notice the many times we are exhorted to do something with reference to "one another" as given here (in parentheses). We are to love (12), greet (4, once it is salute), exhort (2), admonish (2), forbear (2), forgive (2), be kindly affectioned (1), comfort (1), consider (1), edify (1), receive (1) and serve (1).

As can be clearly seen, the matter of considering

one another is much broader than just considering attendance. We must be aware of the conditions and circumstances of the lives of those around us and have consideration for one another. This involves sickness and sorrow, when one is not able to be actively engaged in the work of the congregation. They need the encouragement and support of all who care; whether by phone calls, cards, or visits when possible. The loving concern of fellow Christians can do much to lighten the burden of the oppressed, to make them see that life continues to have meaning (James 1:27). Also we must consider one another in times of joy and happiness. Paul wrote in Romans 12:15 that we are to "rejoice with them that rejoice" just as we are to weep with those who weep -- each is a command.

It is important that we consider one another with regard to our own human weaknesses and frailties. Paul spoke of the "weaker brother" and said that he would have respect for his weakness, that is, he would not exercise his own liberty if that would cause the weaker to stumble (I Corinthians 8:13). We can forego a liberty that might cause someone to stumble IF WE LOVE THEM! It is well that we remember that we might be the weaker brother in a different time (Galatians 6:1; I Corinthians 10:12).

In considering one another, we should remember to be loving as brethren and forgiving of one another (I Thessalonians 4:9; Matthew 6:12, 14, 15). We must be long suffering toward one another (Ephesians 4:2).

If Christians everywhere would practice "considering one another" it would make for more happiness and joy within the spiritual family.

The Fruit Of Selfishness

Jared H. Jackson

Recently we witnessed one of the most disturbing events in modern times -- the breakdown of civilization in several American cities. Thousands of people in Los Angeles, California, for example, lost all sense of right and wrong in an orgy of robbery, arson, and murder.

While we watched the live scenes from a news helicopter, a man was dragged from his vehicle, beaten to a bloody mess, and left for dead. Why is this happening? Some would point to a seemingly unjust jury verdict. I would disagree. Here are some of the reasons why people act the way they do.

First, we have been taught that morality is determined by each individual. The biblical doctrine of absolute morality has been replaced with the tenets of modern humanism in our public school system. The atheist's creed-book asserts: "We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction" (Humanist Manifestos I and II, p 17).

Atheistic philosopher Jean Paul Sarte saw the practical application of this concept when he wrote: "Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist . . ." He further affirmed that the human race is left without "any values or commands that could legitimize our behavior" (quoted in French Philosophers from Descartes to Sarte, p. 485). Can we not see the devastating impact of this philosophy? When man becomes his own god, individual responsibility is denied and chaos reigns.

Second, we have devalued human life by

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What Is The Condition Of Your Soul?

By Vance Hutton

Each person owes his existence to God. It is God who made us (Psalm 100:3). He gives life to all (Acts 17:25). We have been made with body and spirit or soul (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The soul of man is the immortal part of man, or simply stated, that part of a person that will live on and on, and never die. God's nature is spirit (John 4:24) and He has formed a spirit in us (Zechariah 12:1). Surely it is a sobering thought to all of us, that far beyond the grave, yea, forever and ever, we will continue to exist.

The Bible stresses the greater value of the soul compared to the body. Jesus in Matthew 16:26 spoke of the folly of gaining the whole world at the expense of losing one's own soul. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus told his disciples to be more

concerned about the loss of the soul than the loss of the earthly existence of the body. James stresses the value of the soul in exhorting us to make every effort to save the soul from separation from God (James 5:20).

When your soul goes back to the God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7), what will God do with that soul? God longs for our spirits to live with Him eternally (I Timothy 2:4). The sad reality is that most souls are not fitted to live with God. God cannot look on sin (Habakkuk 1:13). The unrighteous cannot enter heaven where God is (I Corinthians 6:9). Notice the three following truths about the soul. These will point our eternal spirits to eternal bliss to be with our God, the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9).

1. SOULS ARE TO BE PURIFIED! The Bible

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What Is The Condition Of Your Soul?

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plainly teaches that our souls are made pure by our obedience to the truth (I Peter 1:22). In obeying the truth, the blood of Jesus Christ washes us from our sins (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5). This purified state is maintained by continued walking by the light of divine truth (I John 1:7). Is your soul purified? If not, it cannot make its abode with God in that condition.

2. SOULS ARE TO BE PROSPEROUS! John referred to the prosperous soul of Gaius (III John 2). This epistle refers to Gaius walking in truth. It refers to his concerns for brethren and strangers. He is admonished to do good and not evil. Are our souls prosperous?

3. SOULS ARE TO BE PROTECTED! Peter makes reference to the keeping of our souls by the faithful Creator (I Peter 4:19). Jesus, in John 10:27-29, speaks of the protection of the soul in the hand of the Father. Jude 24 makes reference to

him that is able to keep us from falling. I Peter 1:3-5 relates our great inheritance that is being kept by God's power. It is imperative and of great importance to notice our role in this protection of the soul. We must hear and follow (John 10:27),

keep ourselves in God's love (Jude 21), have Bible faith (I Peter 1:5), and give diligence to make our calling and election sure (II Peter 1:10, 11). My friend, what is the condition of your soul?

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The Manna, A Type Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

Israel crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness. God gave them manna to eat. The manna lay on the ground each morning and was as small as the hoarfrost or coriander seed. They gathered the manna enough for one day, except the sixth day. On the sixth day they were to gather enough for the

sabbath day. The manna when prepared was

delicious. It tasted like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:13-36). Israel ate the manna in the wilderness, and it sustained their physical life. Jesus is the bread of life and sustains the spiritual life of the believer (John 6:35).

There are many other resemblances between the manna and Christ. Manna was given from heaven to Israel by the grace of God (Exodus 16:11-31; John 6:31). Jesus was given from heaven for all men by the grace of God (John 3:16, 17; 17:5; Hebrews 2:9). Jesus said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6:38). Jesus also said, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John 6:51).

Manna was given to Israel by promise (Exodus 16:4). It was round, which showed completeness and perfection. Israel had to gather the manna and prepare it before eating (Exodus 16:23). The manna was sweet as wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:16-18, 31). Christ was also given by promise (Isaiah 7:14; 53). He was to be the seed of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16). Man receives Christ through obedience, and is made complete in Him (Acts 3:22, 23; Matthew 7:21-27; 17:5; Colossians 2:10).

Manna spoiled when gathered, laid aside, and not used (Exodus 16:19, 20). Likewise, those who reject Christ not only fail to receive the benefit from His life and death, but will suffer severe punishment (Hebrews 10:24-31).

The manna was limited to Israel and ceased when

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The Fruit Of Selfishness

teaching that there is no distinction between animals and the one creation that was made in God's image-mankind. In his best-selling book, The Naked Ape, Desmond Morris averred: "There are one hundred and ninth-three living species of monkeys and apes. One hundred and ninety-two of them are covered with hair. The exception is a naked ape self-named HOMO-SAPIENS" (p. 9). When men lose this distinction, we become subject to the animal kingdom. The rule of law is discarded-survival of self is the one objective.

Third, we also devalue our humanity by teaching that any human life which inconveniences us is expendable. Dr. William Gaylin of Columbia University declared: "It used to be easy to know what we wanted for our children, and now the best for our children might mean deciding which ones to kill. We've always wanted the best for our grandparents, and now that might mean killing

them. . . ." (quoted by Paul Marx in Death Without Dignity, p. 3). To any sensitive person, these statements are absolutely shocking! More shocking is the fact that every year more than one million "inconvenient" babies are being killed through abortion.

There are other specific reasons that could be addressed, but they all have roots in selfishness. James wrote: "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, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (James 3:2-4).

(This article by Jared H. Jackson appeared in the May 1992 issue of REASONING FROM REVELATION, Apologetics Press, Montgomery, AL)

God Has Done His Part -- Have You?

Continued From Page 1

In nearly every direction man turns, he finds evidences of God's revelation. Rebellious effort is required in order for him to overlook it. Paul said that the evidence is so overwhelming that it is inexcusable for a man to claim he is ignorant of God's existence.

The information provided by nature should lead each man to the second source of revelation -- the Bible. In that holy Book one learns what the

Almighty requires of His creatures; he learns how the universe was brought into being, and of the proper place man has in the world. He also learns of God's efforts to provide him with freedom from the slavery of wickedness, and how this was accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-3). In fact, the Bible reveals everything that God requires in order for man to live in hope of eternal life (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:3).

Because God has revealed Himself to man through nature and the Bible, the question: "What can man do?" is appropriate. God has done His part in making Himself and His Will known; He has reached down to man -- to you. Will you reach up to take His hand? He beckons you to accept His revelation and surrender to His will. The book of Acts provides many examples of how people

obeyed God's plan of salvation, and gave themselves over wholly to His service. Briefly, the divine plan stipulates that you: (1) realize you have sinned (Romans 3:23); (2) believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He died to take those sins away (John 3:16; 8:24); (3) repent -- quit practicing sin (Acts 2:38; 17:30), and; (4) submit to God's command of baptism (allow your body to be immersed in water) for the forgiveness of sins. At this point you will be cleansed from your sins by Jesus' blood (cf. Romans 6; Revelation 1:5). If you will then follow God's instructions throughout the rest of your life, God will give you an eternal, joy-filled existence with Him. Why not do it today?

--230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117.

When I Am Well, I'll See A Doctor



Don Williams

What would you think of a person who was very sick and yet refused to see a doctor? Their reasoning was this -- "I know that I am sick, but I will make myself better. When I handle my own illness, then I will go see the doctor!"

Such reasoning is off the mark, for we know that in the greatest majority of cases, you go to the doctor because you are sick, and want to be made well. You go so that he can do something for you. Why do we not practice the same sensibleness in religion? I have had folks tell me, "Preacher, when I get straightened out and get my problems taken care of, I will be at church." What is the church for, if it does not aid in helping folks with their problems? Did Jesus not say, "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31)? In other words, you go to the doctor because you are sick, and you approach Christ because you need help!

What is the church for, if it does not aid in helping folks with their problems? Did Jesus not say, "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31)? In other words, you go to the doctor because you are sick, and you approach Christ because you need help!

It bothers me that some people cannot understand that. Friends, the good book does not say, "Cast off your cares, and then come to him," but "casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). In Ephesians 3:20, we have one of the greatest promises ever given to us, "now unto him that is able to do exceeding, abundantly, above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us." Why do I need to know this, unless

God means this as a comfort and help for me in the midst of my problems?

When David wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1), he was not revealing an untruth. He was pointing out the power source for all of us when the going gets tough. It bothers me to no end to see smart, intelligent, people not avail themselves of that aid in their lives.

No man (save for the Son of Man, Jesus) can walk the road of life successfully by himself.

Jeremiah knew this when he said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in him self -- it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10:23). Wise is the man or woman who realizes that the beautiful song: "I need thee, O I need thee, every hour I need thee." May we look for departed Christians who have strayed from God's way and may we show them just how much they need his guidance and help again. May we look for those on the highway of life who have no direction and need the life-giving power that comes from a saved relationship with Christ through his church.

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

Christ -- The Builder And Founder Of The Church

Kenneth McClain

Romans 16:16 "The churches of Christ salute you." There are a number of reasons why the church of Christ is called the church of Christ. The name "church of Christ" is not a denominational name, nor the exclusive name which the church is referred to in the Bible. Since Christ founded the church and is the very foundation on which the church is built, is it not appropriate to call it the church of Christ?

In Matthew 16:18 our Lord promised to build His church. When one studies the Bible, it is very obvious that Christ is the builder and founder of the New Testament church. Any church founded by someone else or a group of people could not be Christ's church. David said in the long ago, "except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it." Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:15 that the house of God is the church of the living God. Those who build man-made churches can rest assured that their labor will be in vain. Our Lord said in Matthew 15:13, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." If any man is a member of any man-made spiritual household, religious plant or church, he will not be able to stand in the day of judgment. Only those who are faithful members of the church that Christ established will be able to stand in the judgment day.

Christ is not only the founder of the church, but he is the foundation on which the church is built. He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church ..." (Matthew 16:18). The rock, or foundation, that our Lord was speaking of was the confession Peter made that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 16:16); therefore, the rock was not the apostle Peter or any other man, but the fact that Christ was God's Son. In 1 Corinthians 3:11 the apostle Paul states: "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Why be a member of any church built on a man, or some religious doctrine, or some form of church government, and fail to belong to the church which is built on Christ? Since the

church belongs to Christ, every person who becomes a member of the church belongs to Christ, every person who becomes a member of the church must confess that Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37). Christ's church is spoken of as a spiritual stone and be placed on Christ, the foundation, until he first believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

The church that Christ established was started in the city of Jerusalem on the first day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). The coming kingdom of the Messiah was predicted by the prophets (Isaiah 2:2-4; Daniel 2:44). This kingdom was not to be a physical one but a spiritual one (John 18:36).

After Christ's resurrection He appeared to His apostles and said: "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). Before our Lord ascended back to heaven he also said to the apostles that "... ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Ghost did come upon the apostles as Jesus said and gave them power to preach the gospel in different languages gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost, so the Holy Ghost empowered the apostles to preach the gospel in different languages. The gospel was preached -- the people were pricked in their hearts and asked what they must do to be saved. Peter did not say "Pray through" or "Just say, Lord save me" or "Receive the Lord in your hearts," but he, by inspiration, said: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Acts 2:41 says: "Then that they gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The kingdom or church, did come with power as Jesus said would (Mark 9:1). Those who obeyed the message that Peter and the other apostles taught were added to the church (Acts 2:47). Eternal life is promised only to those who are members of Christ's church, the one He established, and the one of which He is the foundation. Is there any promise of eternal salvation to those who belong to a church that was established by a man? Think about it. Your soul is precious. Do not lose it by failing to obey the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

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The Manna, A Type Of Christ

Continued From Page 3

they reached Canaan (Exodus 16:35; Joshua 5:12). Christ is for the whole world, and His grace is for everlasting good for all who will obey Him in this life (Matthew 25:46; John 3:16, 17; 1 John 4:14; Revelation 14:13; 22:14). Therefore, let us not be

derelict in our responsibility for obedience while there is yet time.

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(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Fes
Words of Truth and soberness."

forth the

Acts 26:25

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The Ark Of The Covenant And Christ



W. GADDYS ROY

comparison deserves our attention.

The ark of the covenant was in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle, which was a type of heaven. Christ is now in heaven on the right hand of God making intercessions for us (Hebrew 7:25; I Jn. 2:1-3).

The ark of the covenant was constructed of that which was durable and served to dignify it. It was made of acacia wood overlaid and crowned with pure gold (Exodus 25:10, 11). Christ's life was holy and undefiled, and He was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords with glory and honor (I Timothy 6:15; Hebrews 7:26; 4:15; I Peter 2:22).

The ark of the covenant contained the two tables of stone on which the law was written, a golden pot of the manna that was kept, and Aaron's rod that budded (Exodus 16:32-34; Numbers 17:10; Hebrews 9:4). Each of these items points to Christ. Christ fulfilled the law written on stone and gave the new law of grace and truth that brings salvation (Matthew 5:17; John 1:17; Titus 2:11; Colossians 2:14). Christ is the bread of life (John 6:51). Christ also terminated the priesthood of Aaron and became our abiding priest and king. He will reign until He shall deliver up the kingdom to God when He comes again (I Corinthians 15:24; Hebrews 6:20; 7:11-13; 9:10).

When the time came for Israel to cross the rolling waters of Jordan, the Lord said, "Behold,

the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan" (Jos. 3:11). The priests who bore the ark stood in Jordan, and the waters were cut off and stood in a heap upward until all Israel had crossed over. When the priests

the ark opened the passage through the River Jordan for Israel to reach the promised land. Jesus came to earth, died on the cross and was buried. The third day, Jesus came forth from the grave. Thus, He conquered death, "led captivity captive" and opened the way to heaven for all mankind (Eph. 4:8; Jn. 14:1-4; I Cor. 15:20-26). As the ark passed before the Israelites into Jordan, so Christ has passed before us into death (Jos. 3:11; I Cor. 15:20).

came over, the water returned to normal (Jos. 3:7-

4:18). Therefore, the ark opened the passage through the River Jordan for Israel to reach the promised land. Jesus came to earth, died on the cross and was buried. The third day, Jesus came forth from the grave. Thus, He conquered death; "led captivity captive," and opened the way to heaven for all mankind (Eph. 4:8; Jn. 14:1-4; I Cor. 15:20-26). As the ark passed before the Israelites into Jordan, so Christ has passed before us into death (Jos. 3:11; I Cor. 15:20).

Israel crossed Jordan into the promised land, and God gave them the city of Jericho. Before they took Jericho, the priests were to compass the city once a day for six days, bearing the ark of the covenant, and seven priests were to bear the trumpets before the ark. On the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times, and when the priests made a blast on the trumpets, the people were to shout. They did so, and the walls of the city fell down (Jos. 6:12-20). Christ by His divine power has broken the power of Satan (Eph. 4:8; I Cor. 15:20-26).

The Philistines fought against Israel. They took

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Profit And Loss

By LAMAR PLUNKETT

Matthew 16:26 poses a great question: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This text assumes the reality of the soul. It teaches that the body is one thing, the soul another. It teaches that the soul is a far greater value than the body. It teaches the dignity of man. Communism and all atheistic systems teach that man is merely animal.

Godless systems do not hesitate to snuff out thousands of human lives if those lives interfere

with their aims and ideas.

God teaches a reverence for life. Reverence for the soul of man is the very reason why murder, theft, adultery and covetousness are in all the lists of sins. Basically, they have no respect for the dignity of man.

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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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Compromise



Gus Nichols

As far as the denominational world is concerned, our greatest danger, no doubt, lies in the temptation to compromise and become a sister denominational with the sects around us. People want to be like the crowd. It was this desire that led Israel to demand a king (I Samuel 8). When we were

weak the sects blustered and challenged for debate. They publicly reviewed our sermons and fought us openly and bitterly; but they soon found that their doctrines and practices were no match for the "Thus saith the Lord" which our preachers hurled back at them with withering force and power. They next began to fight us to our backs and secretly organized against us, and tried to create all the prejudice against us they could; but they saw us grow in spite of their campaign of villany against us. Now that we are waxing popular, they are making love to us. They are now using their most powerful weapon. It is compromise. They want us to exchange pulpits with them, and, of course, be too nice to preach the Truth, or point out any of their errors. They want us to join with them in the Ministerial Alliance, where compromise is the order of the day. They want us to join with them in Union Revivals where sectarians, ignorant of God's plan of salvation, do the preaching. They want us to call on them to lead our prayers, when they are in our services, regardless of whether they have been baptized into Christ or not (Romans 6:3). They want us to recognize them as right in doctrine and practice, as though contradictory doctrines could all be right. They want us to

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Must



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye MUST be born again" (John 3:7). "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him MUST worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Yes, there certainly are some "MUSTS" in the language of Divine inspiration!

In our affluent society there are many people who would restrict the Lord. They would reason that as free-moral agents, man is not restricted. Therefore, if God says that man MUST do something to receive His blessings, that obedience to God would negate his freedom. Why MUST man accept salvation, or if rejecting it, why MUST he be punished?

Is not God guilty of doing the same as the thug who suggests, "Your money or your life?" Does God violate man's freedom of choice by demanding obedience, and then inflicting punishment if man is disobedient?

Is there no difference between the demands of the thug and those of God? Surely there is! The thug has no rights on either the man's life or his money, whereas God is the giver of life and all

Not Of This World

By JOHN McCOURT

"These are in the world . . . The world hath them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:11, 14).

If Christ was not of the world, why was He in the world? If there was not sympathy between Him and the world, why was it that He lived in it, and did not remain in that high, holy and blessed world to which He belonged? The answer is, the Father had sent Him into the world.

If there was not sympathy between Him and the world, why was it that He lived in it, and did not

blessings (Genesis 1-3; Acts 17:28; James 1:17). God is the creator and has the "right of creation" to make the demands that He does. Solomon said that the whole duty of man is to "fear God and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Moses said, "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13). The Psalmist said "it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (100:3). Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God declared that man was "created for my glory, whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made . . . I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise" (Isaiah 43:7, 21). Man needs to realize that he is not fulfilling God's purpose for him when he disobeys the will of God and is violating the very purpose for his existence.

Man fails so often to comprehend the concept of a free-moral agent. Man has the freedom given by God to obey or disobey. In making either decision, man needs to realize that he must "face the music" of his decision. Every decision that man makes is fraught with consequence. All of God's MUSTS are there because man does indeed have the freedom to accept or reject God's purpose in his life. Man must make this grave decision knowing that "we MUST all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).

remain in that high, holy and blessed world to which He belonged? The answer is, the Father had sent Him into the world.

"In the world," in human nature, because God would show that this nature belongs to Him, and not to the god of this world.

"In the world," in fellowship with men, to enter into loving relationship with them, to be seen and known of them, and thus to win them back to

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Moral Absolutes

Barry Gilreath

We live in a time when men of all walks of life are aggressively seeking to hide moral absolutes in a dark closet of obscurity to be disregarded when making decisions. Just turn on Donahue or Geraldo and you'll see what I mean. If you want to be praised as a hero; just speak out for gay rights, abortion rights, open marriages or some other flagrant rebellion and the media, along with the masses, will hail you as a great liberator. If you seek applause and popularity, just don't rock the boat. And if you must speak, support the "new morality" (which isn't so new) that allows every person to determine that which is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6). This way you won't be labeled as a religious fanatic or an ultra-right wing, uneducated and ignorant Christian.

What has brought America to this sad state of ambiguity? Surely it has been through the help of the modern-day media. Did you know that the average American watches 42 hours of TV a week? And when you consider the "If it's all right for you, then do it" message that we and our children are bombarded with each day, it's no wonder that the church is facing the great moral issues of today and that a large number of our brethren are content to close their eyes and close their Bibles too.

Well, one man took the networks to task. His

name is Ted Koppel. He hosts Nightline. Some time ago he was asked to make a speech to graduates of Duke University. In his speech he discussed how TV was destroying our nation. He said "TV seeks to be ambiguous - nothing is right or wrong - it's only in the eyes of the beholder." He then continued to say, "Should we say to our people, it's okay to shoot up; just don't use a dirty needle. It's okay to commit adultery; just use protection. It's okay to drink; just don't get drunk or don't drive your car," and to that Mr. Koppel said, and I quote, "No! No! No! Not because it isn't cool or you might end up pregnant or with cancer or dying in an AIDS ward, but because it is wrong. For moral absolutes we have substituted moral ambiguities. We in the media communicate with everyone and say absolutely nothing. Where are the moral statements, the absolutes? We have erected our tower of Babel with a TV antenna, proclaiming equal opinions, free academics, and an ocean of banality. Our society finds moral absolutes too strong a medicine to digest undiluted, but truth is not a slight tap on the shoulder, it is a howling reproach. What Moses received at Sinai are the Ten Commandments, not the ten suggestions!"

Keep in mind that Mr. Koppel is a Jew. He is speaking to graduates of Duke University, placing

his reputation and career on the line. Yet he is taking a stand for morals and absolutes. But we see brethren, including ministers in the Lord's church, who are content keeping silent about them on the job or in the pulpits! It's not new to hear even preachers, elders and other Christians openly defending adultery, immodesty, social drinking, etc. as gray areas in which truth can not be determined. May God help us to open our eyes and walk in the clear road of righteousness (John 8:32; 12:48; 16:13; 17:17; Proverbs 28:26; Proverbs 14:34; Psalm 23:3).

If we are going to turn the gospel into a gospel of "feel good" only, we're long gone. A Christian is not to become a Bambi who walks naively through his world unaware of all the dangers of the forest around him. Nor is the Bible to be a pretty pink pamphlet with a scratch and sniff section at the back to constantly make one feel good about himself. The Bible has teeth in it. And sometimes it bites and sometimes it hurts. But thanks be to God that his love for us is so great that He is always consistent and clear in his moral absolutes.

Let's bring moral absolutes out of our closets and teach our children and brethren to be ashamed of sin rather than God's absolute standards.

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Dealing With Criticism

By HARRY GIPSON

"Do not pay attention to every word people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you -- for you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others" (Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22).

People bad-mouth each other. They are critical in their judgments and evaluations of each other. It is as certain as sin. Some of us always want to know what our critics are saying about us, but that's not healthy.

First, it sets up a false standard that will choke you to death. Second, it controls you like a puppet -- and the strings are the cursings of others. David had good advice for those times when you are

being punched around by the blows of your detractor's verbal missiles. "I, like a deaf man, do not hear" (Psalm 38:13).

When you overhear someone speaking ill of you, do not be surprised. After all, "you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others." That is an eloquent twist of the sword, but it is true, is it not? We, too, have bad-mouthed some folks, even those whom we like.

When you overhear some speaking ill of you,

do not be surprised. After all, "you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others." That is an eloquent twist of the sword, but it is true, is it not? We, too, have bad-mouthed some folks, even those whom we like.

We prove the point. All of us have a problem with sin which prompts us to speak ill of each other. A simple realization of this truth should move all of us to be more tolerant and less judgmental of those who are just as critical of us as we have been of them. "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1, 2; Romans 14:3; I Corinthians 4; Colossians 2:16; James 4:11, 12).

Not Of This World

Continued from page 2

the Father.

"In the world," in the struggle with the powers which rule the world, to learn obedience, and so to perfect and sanctify man.

"Not of the world," but of heaven, to manifest and bring near the life that is in God, and which

man had lost, that man might see and long for it.

"Not of the world," witnessing against its sin and departure from God, its impotence to know and please God.

"Not of the world," founding a kingdom entirely heavenly in origin and nature. Independent

of all that the world holds desirable or necessary, with principles and laws the very opposite of those that rule in the world.

"Not of the world," in order to redeem all and bring them into that new and heavenly kingdom which He has revealed.

Compromise

Continued from page 2

preach on the things which all alike believe and leave off doctrinal preaching, as they call it. Now, if you do not believe there is danger in this appeal for compromise, look around and you may be surprised to find that some of us have already fallen for this sort of thing.

During the war many boys, scattered to the four winds in the service of their country, married out of the church. These in-laws are all the way from Catholics down to nothing in religious beliefs. They present another temptation to compromise. Of course, our children do not want their companions to dislike "our religion" and "our preachers"; therefore, we are requested to tone down the preaching, so as not to contradict anyone's belief nor disturb the conscience of those in error, lest trouble come into the home. Thus a new gospel is demanded, with all the power of the Gospel of Christ extracted from it (Romans 1:16).

Then some brother in society, or standing high in the business world, brings to hear "our preacher." He wants his friends to like "our church." He, too, wants the saving power taken out of the message. If the preacher preaches it straight, as it is in the Book, the love of God and His precious promises, together with the facts of sin and death, hell fire and brimstone, and some are offended and heard to express dissatisfaction with the preacher and the church, some may put on a move to change preachers. Here is a danger facing the church, and it tends to corrupt the Gospel and please the people, rather than try to save them and please the Lord (Romans 15:3).

All of this has brought about a temptation to lecture, instead of "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). In order to hold their jobs, many preachers are tempted to preach so as to bring great crowds, and break all past attendance records. Brethren, they might as well stay at home, as far as salvation is concerned, if they are not going to preach the Gospel to them in all its saving power (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). Crowds mean nothing if you have to compromise the Truth to draw them. Pretty little flowery speeches, copied from some sectarian book of sermons, are not what this crooked generation needs. They need to be shown that every man and woman, boy and girl upon the earth is lost and "in danger of hell fire" and can only be saved by hearing the Gospel, believing in Christ and obeying his commands as revealed in the Gospel. Now, they may like this, or they may not; but no man can preach the Gospel without preaching this, regardless of where he starts. To give one's own unsupported assertions in the pulpit is not preaching "the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Tell what the Bible says about the matter under study. If you cannot quote the words of the Lord, stop and "read it to the people." Let God get his "say" in before you start giving them human wisdom. Let God be heard, and let us "preach the word." If any preacher does not know the "Word" let him quit having running fits long enough to study about five hours per day for the next ten years and he can then tell his audience what God says, or at least turn and read it at once. If anyone says he does not have time to study, as Paul commands all preachers to do (II Timothy 2:15), it

may be because he is spending his time running around making little "pop" calls where there is no one to be taught or converted, or no one sick. Brethren, you can never know the Bible if you are going to be a sectarian "pastor" in a church of Christ. If you can "preach the word" then preach it, but if not, get down and out and let some old brother get up and read the Scriptures to the dear people who have come to hear the word. I don't

mind flowers on the table, but when I am hungry I want first of all plenty of good substantial food. I can't live on flowers. If you can "preach the word" and make a pretty speech out of it, well and good, but otherwise, just "preach the word." Don't compromise the Truth for anyone, nor under any circumstances. Of course, let wisdom and prudence direct you as to the best way to preach the Truth.

Profit And Loss

Continued from page 1

The soul is valuable in its origin; it came from God. No man can make a soul. It is valuable in its function; it lifts man above the animal. Beasts are satisfied with physical comforts. They cannot really admire a work of art -- a beautiful painting, a lovely scene or a superb piece of music beautifully played. Man is different; "He cannot live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4).

The soul is valuable in its redemption. Look what God was willing to pay for it (Romans 5:8)! How can it mean enough to God for Him to send His Son (John 3:16, 17) and so little to us that we sell it for "a mess of pottage?" Suppose man really finds his life -finds all his material aims fulfilled. He still finds a dull ache and an emptiness he cannot explain. There is a hidden hunger that physical bread cannot satisfy. God counted the soul worth so much that He sent His Son from Heaven and watched Him die on a cross for our redemption (Matthew 27:46). He heard their plots (Matthew 27:20-25; Luke 23:1-23); He saw the cruel treatment (John 18:12, 22-24; 19:1-3, 16-18); He must have shared the agony as they drove the nails into the hands of His Son. One word from God and his angels could have smitten Pilate,

Herod, the chief priests and all the rest into Hades and rescued His Son (Mark 14:36; Matthew 26:52-54; John 18-36; 19:11). He saw the suffering; but He saw millions of lost souls (Matthew 1:21; 18:11; John 1:11, 12); and He let Jesus die. This is what a soul is worth to God.

The soul is valuable in its destiny. The soul will spend eternity somewhere -- in heaven or hell (Matthew 25:46). It is eternal -- immortal. It is worth more than all the world. Suppose someone sent you a present in a pretty package. What a fool we would be to take care of the package and throw the gift away. Someone entrusts you with a child and brings a few clothes. Upon returning they ask about the welfare of the child. You run and show that you have washed and ironed the clothes. The parents are little concerned with the nice clothes. They want to know about the child. They are mortified to learn that you were so busy ironing clothes that you let the child wander away. A savage might trade you a diamond for a piece of red cloth. The wise man said: "Vanity of vanities" (Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14). Material things let us down in this life. We can't have them in the end. Death and judgment are coming. "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). Prepare now.

The Ark Of The Covenant And Christ

Continued from page 1

the ark of the covenant and brought it to Ashdod and put it in the house of their idol, Dagon. The presence of the ark broke the idol in pieces (I Sam. 5:1-4). All idols and false religions will fail. If they do not fail in time, they will fail at the judgment (Matt. 15:13; II Jn. 9; Jn. 12:48). "But the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and destroyed them, and smote them with tumors, even Ashdod and the borders thereof" (I Sam. 5:6).

Wherever the ark was carried and misused, there was a curse upon the people (I Sam. ch. 5 & 6). However, the ark was a blessing to God's

people (II Sam. 6:11). Christ is a blessing to all who obey Him (Matt. 11:28-30; 28:18-20; Mk. 16:16; Heb. 5:9), but those who refuse to hear and obey Christ will be punished (Acts 3:22, 23; Rom. 2:8-11).

The ark of the covenant perished with the destruction of the first temple. In contrast, Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). His blessings will abide forever (I Pet. 1:3, 4).

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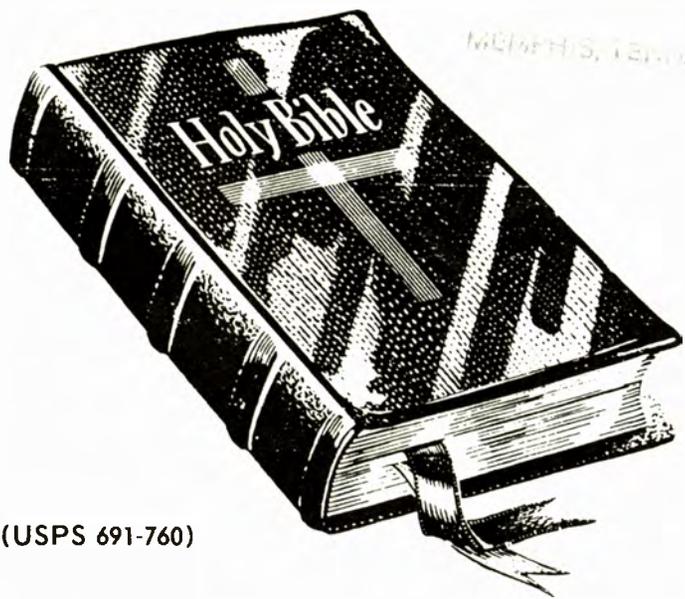
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Words of Truth

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus
Words of Truth and soberness."

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26:25

VOLUME 28

JULY 17, 1992

NUMBER 29

Preaching Against Sin



Woodrow Wilson was a man of few words. It is said that on a certain Sunday Mr. Wilson had gone to church unaccompanied by his wife. Upon his return home his wife asked what the preacher had preached about.

"Sin," was the answer the president gave.

Bobby Duncan "Oh? And what did he say about it?" inquired the wife.

"He's against it," replied Mr. Wilson.

Every preacher of the gospel is willing to go on record as being against sin. In fact, some even get quite offensive in their reunciation of sin. (There is never any excuse for preachers or anyone else to act in an unseemly manner).

But in the bulletins I read and the lectures and sermons I hear I find there are a number of preachers who will take a firm stand against sin -- provided it is the sin of some preacher in a neighboring congregation or some sin of brethren in a distant place. Attacks against the liberal or otherwise sinful teachings and/or practices of our preaching brethren and of brethren in general need to be made. Far be it from this writer to criticize those who criticize those in sin and error! We also do some writing and some speaking on lectureships and in the local pulpit with reference to brotherhood problems.

But while the local congregations needs to be informed about matters which threaten the peace and welfare of the church across the nation, is there not a tendency to preach against sins in the brotherhood to the neglect of preaching against sins in the local congregation? It doesn't take a great deal of courage to cry out during a lectureship against some error or sin which is being vehemently opposed by ninety-seven percent of those in attendance at the lectureship. It doesn't take a great deal of courage to write an article in a bulletin and inform the members of the local

congregation about some brother who has departed from the faith in some major point of doctrine. Not only so, but such pronouncements against sin help assure the faithful that one is completely and totally sound.

It doesn't take a great deal of courage to cry out during a lectureship against some error or sin which is being vehemently opposed by ninety-seven percent of those in attendance at the lectureship.

But how much preaching are we doing against the sins that are to be found among the members of our own congregations, or which are a temptation to them? Is social drinking a sin? Is dancing a sin? Is gambling (buying chances) a sin? Is it sinful to wear shorts or to go public swimming? Is it sinful to gossip? Is it sinful to tell off-color jokes or to use bad language? Is it sinful to feed one's mind on pornography? ARE WE PREACHING AGAINST THESE?

How much preaching are we doing against the sins that are to be found among the members of our own congregations, or which are a temptation to them?

If these things we have mentioned are sinful, and a preacher mentions them only slightly once in a while, but spends all his energy crying out against the sins of the brotherhood, that preacher is a

coward.

True, Jesus warned his disciples against the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23). But Jesus also directed certain remarks to those scribes and Pharisees, condemning them because of their sins (Matthew 23). He also, on numerous occasions, rebuked the disciples themselves.

True, the false doctrines that are being taught on the West Coast today will be taught east of the Mississippi tomorrow, and our people need to be informed and warned, even before the false doctrines reach their ears. But the sins of the flesh that are being engaged in all around us will damn more members of the average congregation than some false doctrine being taught by some prominent brother and being refuted in practically every sound brotherhood paper.

Lest I be misunderstood, please do not think me to be criticizing those who write or preach against the errors of doctrine which disturb the brotherhood. I endorse such writing and preaching, and even do some of it myself. What I am saying is that true loyalty to the doctrine of Christ demands that one also take a firm position against the sins of those in his own local congregation. We who preach must preach against sin!

(This timely and forceful article was written by Bobby Duncan, Editor of Vigil, in 1984. It reappeared in May 1992 with this comment by brother Duncan, "We believe what was said then needs to be said again." I heartily agree! EDITOR)

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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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

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A Wolf Sanctuary

G. K. Wallace

Paul taught that "grievous wolves" would enter in among you, not sparing the flock and would thus destroy the church. Elders are warned to be alert to false teachers. The wolf will come as he has done in the past. The love of God is not broad enough to cover the conduct and teachings of the wolf. Love does not whitewash false teachers. Love does not excuse the wolf in the flock. Love does not invite or permit the wolf to enter the flock. The good shepherd will lay down his life to protect his sheep. There is a vast difference between letting a false teacher sit in an audience while "holding his opinion" and putting him up to teach his divisive ways under the guise of being broad minded. "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth them" (John 10:12).

The love of God is not broad enough to cover the conduct and teachings of the wolf. Love does not excuse the wolf in the flock. Love does not invite or permit the wolf to enter the flock.

It is the duty of the shepherd to protect the sheep. However, under the guise of "academic freedom" wolves feel free to devour the sheep. Some of these wolves are not even in "sheep's clothing" but openly avow that they intend to teach false

Continued On Page 3



The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

God Holds The Future In His Hands



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The song, "God Holds the Future In His Hands" has a great message as well as being a lovely song. "Dread not the things that are ahead, The burdens great, the sinking sands, The thorns that o'er the path are spread, God holds the future in His hands! We know not

what tomorrow hides, Of sun or storm, of good or ill; We only know His dear hand guides, And He will be our Father still! His hand created earth and sky, The zephyrs and the storms that rage, And years to come and years gone by To Him are but an open page! Live close to Him and trust His love, Assured that while on earth we roam, What e'er may come, He bends above To guide His children safely home!" The chorus says, "God holds the future in His hands, And every heart He understands; On Him depend; He is your Friend; He holds the future in His hands." Is it not wonderful to worship and serve such a wonderful Heavenly Father!!

Man knows not what the future holds, but often makes predictions anyway! Here is a listing of some predictions concerning the family in the year 2010. (1) Married couples will account for less than half of all households. (2) About 35% of those married couples will have either an adopted child or a step-child. (3) Hispanics will outnumber African Americans to become the nation's largest minority. (4) Half of all the children born in New York City will be on welfare, and other large cities will have similar circumstances. (5) Full-time homemakers will become virtually extinct with over 80% of all women ages 25-54 being employed and most of the rest being unemployed only temporarily. (6) The nation will begin to experience a shortage of doctors, nurses, and hospital beds, as more Americans move into the older age brackets. In fact, people will live longer than they want to. Life expectancy will continue to increase beyond the ability of medicine to provide for a comfortable life. Euthanasia will be generally accepted and businesses will offer legal, financial, and psychological services to those who want to die.

These predictions seem very ominous and fraught with pessimism. While it is very possible that they are correct, it is also true that Christians must remain faithful and serve the great God who holds the future in His hands. We must heed the warnings of inspired men and not be moved by fear but consider the witnesses (Hebrews 11, 12) who have through faith, even in disastrous times, trusted in Jehovah.

Solomon said in Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Jeremiah 9:23, 24 instructs us "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Ira Stamphill wrote words of encouragement. He wrote, "I don't know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day; I don't borrow from its sunshine, For its skies may turn to gray; I don't worry o're the future, For I know what Jesus said, "And today I'll walk beside Him, For He knows what is ahead. Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand; BUT I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED, AND AM PERSUADED THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP THAT WHICH I HAVE COMMITTED TO HIM AGAINST THAT DAY" (II Timothy 1:12). God holds the future in His hands and so long as we continue with Him, our future is secure.

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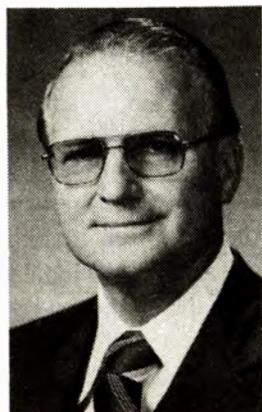
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What About King James'?



Bobby Key

In a recent Bible class the discussion turned to Bible translations. The King James Version was severely criticized by some in the class as being out-dated. I felt the criticism to be unjust and unfounded. The King James Version is still a good translation, and is head and shoulders above some of the modern

versions in my judgment.

Still others in the class maintained that the King James Version of the Bible was the only inspired version. One lady contended that her Bible was written by Saint James, and she thought that perhaps he was one of the apostles. I am sure that King James of England has been given much more praise and glory than he deserves. At one period in our history, it was against the law to read the Bible in England. After much persecution, the time was ripe for the circulation of an English translation of the Bible. The power of the king was needed for such an undertaking. After some persuasion, King James gave his approval for this much needed translation.

Still others in the class maintained that the King James Version of the Bible was the only inspired version. One lady contended that her Bible was written by Saint James, and she thought that perhaps he was one of the apostles. I am sure that King James of England has been given much more praise and glory than he deserves.

The translation was called "The Authorized Version" because the King authorized it. It is a faithful translation, and has been the source of faith and hope for millions through the years.

The translation was dedicated to "Saint James, the King," and he was heralded as the head of the church and defender of the faith. The king basked in this undeserved honor until his death.

A casual glance at history reveals God using

unworthy people to carry out His purpose. The Lord has often over-ruled the bigotry of national leaders to bless His people. Henry the VIII is another example of this. He wanted to get rid of his wife, but the pope would not grant him permission. The king became angry and divorced her anyway. His high-handed action tore England loose from the Catholic church. Henry the VIII became known as a great religious reformer and as a defender of the faith, even though he had six wives! He was a base man, and yet marched under the banner of a great reformer.

Some of the greatest reforms in history were brought about by men whose personal lives and motives were corrupt. God has sometimes used such men to accomplish His purpose. Bad men preached the gospel in Paul's day, and some such men are in positions of leadership today. A number of great national heroes of this century have been immoral and corrupt. Some even have a holiday named in their honor.

Some of the greatest reforms in history were brought about by men whose personal lives and motives were corrupt. God has sometimes used such men to accomplish His purpose. Bad men preached the gospel in Paul's day, and some such men are in positions of leadership today.

Paul wrote, "Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Philippians 1:16, 17). While Paul condemned the hypocrisy of these unworthy teachers, he rejoiced that good was done (Philippians 1:18-20).

Not a few Christians have become concerned because the person who taught them the Truth, and baptized them into Christ was found to be insincere, dishonest, or morally corrupt. This is a tragedy and a shame, but it does happen. Such does not make anyone's baptism invalid, however. The student is not responsible for the actions of his teacher; every man must give an account for himself to God. How we learned the Truth is not important; the important thing is that we did learn and obey the Truth. We will not be held responsible for the way he handles the teaching he received.

Good people should not become alarmed because God sometimes uses bad people to accomplish His purpose. The Bible is replete with such unworthy leaders and teachers. He causes "all things to work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:38).

--324 17th Street, Miami, OK 74354.

A Wolf Sanctuary

Continued From Page 2

doctrine. They are in the pulpit and in our schools. Our schools were built to provide a place for controlled environment and teaching. The charters of these schools set out the bounds of the directors and the teachers. He who accepts a position in a Christian school is honor bound to abide by the purposes of the design of the school. Some of the schools have strayed or have been stolen. If a teacher does not agree with the principles for which the school was built he should go, like a gentleman, to some other school. His effort to disrupt the Word for which the school was founded is not "academic freedom" but subversion and rebellion. The administrators and directors of our schools should stand by the charter and purposes of our schools. Elders should protect the "flock." *"The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep" (John 10:13).*

Brother Keeble used to say as he attacked false doctrine that it is "rooting time." Jesus said, *"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13-14).* Only the blind "leader" will fail to remove the poisonous plant. It is being said, "We do not have debates like we once did." That is true and we are partly to blame. We are not challenging the false teachers of our day. The opponents of Truth constantly argue and debate their cause. However, they prefer to do this without an opponent. All propagandists make repeated efforts in

argumentation to get across their points. It is being said, "No one is ever converted by an argument." Yet, you cannot make a politician or a political canvasser believe that. The Nazis and the Communists were quick to see the power of argumentation on belief and conduct. Opinion is not always formed by argumentation but a good measure of it is. If you doubt this just listen to a liberal debate that debating is wrong.

Today liberal brethren think they can win the denominational world by joining with them in some way. To join with false teachers in so-called "dialogue" may gain a measure of commendation from sectarian leaders for what they call "good sense" and "broadmindedness." However, let these "good fellows" try to lead their bedfellows into a full knowledge of obedience to the Gospel of Christ and they will find themselves completely ostracized.

We need now, more than ever, to press the true Gospel with zeal and persistency. Worldly prudence will suggest that we be more quiet and unobtrusive in the propagation of the faith. This time-serving expediency has become the disgrace of our age. We need to be "instant in season, out of season" and to keep in mind that the Gospel is the "power of God" unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Let's not permit the house of God to become a wolf sanctuary.

Strange And Unusual Statements Surrounding The Death Of Christ



Don Williams

As I recently read all the accounts of the death of Christ in the Gospels, it was interesting to note some of the unusual statements made to and about Christ from some of the most unlikely characters. Following are some of these unique statements.

"It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24). Jesus gives this interesting commentary on the life of Judas, who would betray him. How sad that Judas gained 30 pieces of silver and lost his life because of it. Men sell their souls for a great deal less today. "Still, as of old, man by himself is priced; for 30 pieces of silver, Judas sold himself, not Christ."

"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matthew 26:35). I honestly believe that Peter meant every word that he had stated to our Lord. I believe he felt that, come what may, he would be standing (or hanging) by the Lord's side in the end. Does this not show us just how real temptation is, and how powerful the pressure from peers can be upon us? Peter followed afar off (Verse 58) and then sat down among the servants and soldiers to warm himself by the fire. The influence of those about him did not make standing up for our Lord any easier, and he ended up by denying him three times.

"Have thou nothing to do with that just man" (Matthew 27:19). It is interesting to me that on occasion, non-religious people can see things we Christians cannot see. In this instance, Pilate's wife knew that Jesus was innocent, and she told her husband not to condemn him. He washed his hands of the matter, but still allowed our Lord to go to the cross. Too many today desire to be neutral in reference to Jesus, but as he stated, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30).

Pilate's wife knew that Jesus was innocent, and she told her husband not to condemn him. He washed his hands of the matter, but still allowed our Lord to go to the cross. Too many today desire to be neutral in reference to Jesus, but as he stated, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30).

"Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). As far as we know, this Roman soldier had never heard our Lord preach nor seen him heal someone of a great disease. He had never been in his company before -- he had only watched him die. He had seen countless others die, but this



Johnny Ramsey

death was far different than all the others. There were no curses or cries for mercy -- only statements made for others (the thief, mankind, and his mother), himself ("My God, My God," and "I thirst"), and a statement for the soldier to know that this was God's Son. Have you confessed what this man knew, that Jesus is God's Son? Are you living for Him today? You should!

loyalty and devoted allegiance.

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Standing In Awe

The word "*devout*" means "*to stand in awe.*" Some are amazed in the presence of famous actors, athletes, politicians, or financiers. Many in our day, however, evince no fear or respect for God or the Bible. Even some brethren have the audacity to make light of

the commandments of the Lord and denigrate Bible doctrine and scriptural worship. Such folk pervert proper love (John 14:15) and emphasize cheap grace. But Galatians 5:6 still rings through the corridors of time to remind us that the only thing that avails before our Maker is "*faith working through love.*" Heaven's grace teaches us (Titus 2:11-12) and must be preached (Acts 20:24) lest we fail that subject in the Lord's school (II Corinthians 6:1; Hebrews 12:15). The grace of God is "*in Christ*" (II Timothy 2:1), and the Bible tells us how to get into the Savior (Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12).

Since Jehovah is our help and deliverer (Psalm 70:5), we need to stand in awe of Him and His word (Psalm 119:161). There is a legitimate fear or respect for the Almighty that must exist always in our lives (Psalm 89:7), "*For our God is a consuming fire*" (Hebrews 12:28). In an old and powerful hymn we read:

*This day be grateful homage paid,
And loud hosannas sung;
Let gladness dwell in every heart,
And praise on every tongue.*

We need to do a much better job of teaching the young to reverence the Maker of us all. In Proverbs 8:17 we read this beautiful promise: "*Those who seek me early shall find me.*"

Just prior to warning those who show disdain for God by disrespect for Scripture, the writer declares solemnly, "*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul*" (Psalm 66:16). The psalmist beckoned the young, "*Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord*" (Psalm 34:11). Since "*God ruleth by his power forever*" (Psalm 66:7), we truly should stand in awe of His majesty. Only God can set us free from all the tribulation that troubles us (Psalm 34:19), we owe Him absolute

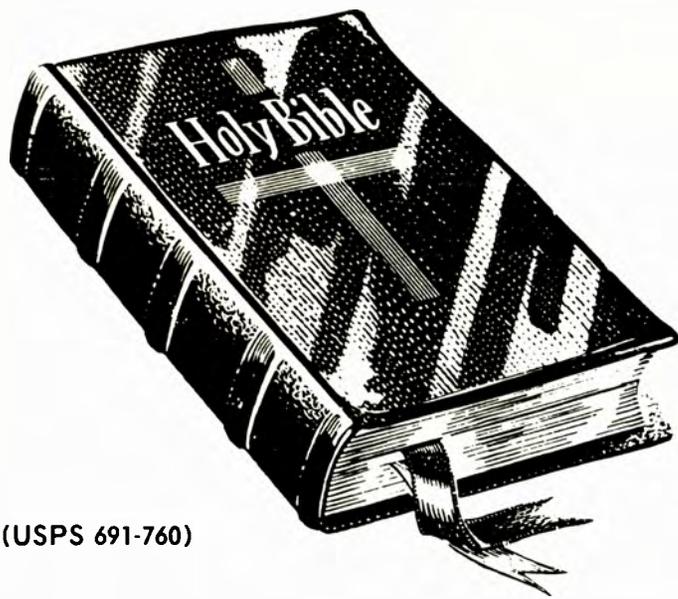
loyalty and devoted allegiance.

Too many people seek the easy road rather than a more challenging path that would perfect and mature them in the way of the Lord. They only fear what people think of them instead of respecting the wrath of God (Romans 11:22; Hebrews 10:31). Someone has well said, "Better to suffer for the truth than to be rewarded for a lie." Arrogance on the part of mankind is an affront to Jehovah who made us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7; Ephesians 3:21). Sadly, the one who wrote the following is at least somewhat accurate: "Some people would not hesitate to drive up to the gate of heaven, and honk." But our Savior made it clear that such characters can plead ardently for entrance into that supernal realm without success (Matthew 7:21).

They only fear what people think of them instead of respecting the wrath of God (Romans 11:22; Hebrews 10:31). Someone has well said, "Better to suffer for the truth than to be rewarded for a lie." Arrogance on the part of mankind is an affront to Jehovah who made us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7; Ephesians 3:21).

Standing in awe of the Redeemer means that we respect His commands, His church and His challenge to pursue the spiritual life of a devoted Christian (Acts 2:41-42; Luke 9:62). Those who reverence human achievement in secular emphasis will one day understand Solomon's final evaluation of such misplaced awe: "*All was vanity and vexation of the spirit, and there was no profit under the sun*" (Ecclesiastes 2:11). Let us, therefore, stand in awe of the unchanging God (Malachi 3:6) and press on with a determined pace toward the mansions in the sky!

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

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VOLUME 28

JULY 24, 1992

NUMBER 30

"Yield Not To Temptation"



Vance Hutton

The summer season is here. Most people eagerly await the change from winter to spring and summer. This wonderful time of the year reminds us of the Lord's existence, his power, and his faithfulness. God has promised that man will experience the changing of the seasons for as long as

the earth stands (Genesis 8:22). It is a blessing to be privileged to enjoy God's earth. Truly, God has been good to us all.

Although spring and summer are such marvelous times, it becomes imperative for us to be on guard and take heed lest we fall victim to some very strong temptations during these seasons. Satan works hard all year long but he has some extra tools with which to labor during the spring and summer months. Notice the following dangers associated with spring and summer in our area:

1) THE TEMPTATION TO SIN IN OUR RECREATION: Most recreation is not sinful in and of itself. Jesus spoke of the need of rest for the body in Mark 6:31. It becomes tempting for many to spend entirely too much time and money for recreation. Money rightfully belonging and needed for the family and the Lord's work should never be spent on recreation. Are we using our time wisely (Ephesians 5:16)? Are we good stewards in these areas before God (I Corinthians 4:2)? Are our lives unbalanced toward recreation and fun to the expense of things spiritual?

2) THE TEMPTATION TO DRESS IMMODESTLY IN PUBLIC: Summer tempts many folk to not remember the Lord's commands about decency and modesty (I Timothy 2:9). We are taught to be examples of godliness and purity, to be the salt of the earth, to be the light of the world, and never to live before others as an offence of stumbling. Both women and men are often seduced into parading before others in immodest

dress during this season. These things ought not so to be. Long before one hundred years from now you will be glad you made the choice to dress modestly.

It becomes tempting for many to spend entirely too much time and money for recreation. Money rightfully belonging and needed for the family and the Lord's work should never be spent on recreation.

3) THE TEMPTATION TO FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLY: Many will willfully choose summer activities over the worship assemblies. It grieves me to see schools, clubs, reunions, decorations, and sporting events by the dozen along with all their activities continue to gain precedence over the worship hour. Let us honor the dead, and remember our families, but not at the expense of placing God in second place. Is the Lord and his kingdom most important to us? Jesus said it must be first (Matthew 6:33).

4) THE TEMPTATION TO SHUN OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH: The spring and summer will be filled with opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, worship and encouragement. To fail to take advantage of such is to sin (James 4:17). We can be thankful that God is patient with us but for God to be just he must hold us accountable for blessings, privileges, and opportunities sent our way. What will we do in response to all the gospel meetings and other opportunities of study over the summer?

5) THE TEMPTATION TO FORSAKE ONE'S OWN FAMILY: Many are tempted to be so selfish in their summer pursuits that their own families will be neglected. Our mates and children are so important. Golfing and fishing are wholesome sports but can lead to sin if family responsibilities

are forsaken (I Timothy 5:8). The obligations to the family the year round must be remembered.

6) THE TEMPTATION TO PUT UNDUE EMPHASIS ON JOBS: Some will allow summer work to rob them of worship, study, evangelism, and doing good. The Lord will provide if we will seek him and the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). Satan will be happy for us to serve the Lord only in certain seasons. He knows he owns us in such lukewarm service.

7) THE TEMPTATION TO FREQUENT PLACES UNBECOMING TO CHRISTIANS: Summer often brings the tendency for people to cater to places unbecoming Christians. Public swimming pools of mixed bathers, and beaches for the same, are no places for Christians to participate with such. Many parties and the dance become spawning ground for sin and unrighteousness.

Let us enjoy the spring and summer, but not fall victim to Satan. There will always be a way of escape from temptation provided (I Corinthians 10:13). Let us not yield. We can remember the words of the Lord, pray for strength, say no, or flee therefrom. We must be Christians all year long. We one day will be eternally glad we were.

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(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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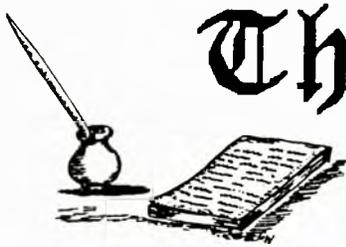
Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501

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The Editor's Pen



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

When Priorities Are Right



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

One must know what he is seeking and how to achieve that goal to be successful. All too often we get somewhat confused as to what is really important.

A Sunday edition of the SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS carried a most interesting news item. A wealthy businessman was being sued by his wife for divorce. The wife in seeking the divorce is asking that her husband provide her with a monthly settlement of nearly TWENTY EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS. The itemized account included the following:

Vacation	\$10,446.00
Clothing	\$ 6,452.00
Restaurants	\$ 2,600.00
Gifts	\$ 2,267.00
Groceries	\$ 1,592.00
Beauty Parlor	\$ 1,440.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,407.00
Furnishings	\$ 1,255.00
Pet Care	\$ 171.00
Church Charities	\$ 20.00

It is most interesting that in her listing of "monthly demands" she saw fit to "in some small way" include church charities for the WHOPPING AMOUNT of \$20.00. That \$20.00 amounts to .000714% or 1/1400th of her monthly expenditures. It is easy to observe that she never took seriously the statement of Jesus, "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 TREASURES IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO" (Matthew 6:19-21).

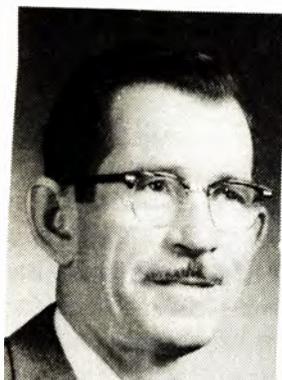
Dear friend, how often do you stop to examine your own personal priorities? What is the first item on your priority listing (Matthew 6:33)? Where do you place God and the Son of God? Where in importance to your life is the body of Christ for

which He died? How do you evaluate the Bible, God's living letter (Hebrews 4:12)? Do not be afraid to "make a priority list" of the important things in your life! It may well be that you need to make changes, but often growth comes through changes that are made for the right reason.

Not only does the Bible say, "seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33), but it also says, "this they did, not as we had hoped, but first GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD, and then to us by the will of God" (II Corinthians 8:5). Paul wrote to the church at Rome, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). His life's directions always pointed toward his Saviour and heaven as is indicated in Philippians 3:8, 9 when he said, "But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be FOUND IN HIM. . . "

When SPIRITUAL THINGS head our priority lists we will find that the church will grow, our families will be strengthened, life will be worth the living, our physical needs will truly be plentiful, and relationships will become healthier and most wonderful. Remembering the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:26 helps us to get a better perspective of our priorities. Yes, when our priorities are in the right place, things will be much more enjoyable here and hereafter. It is good to remember that "what a man goes after here will determine where the man goes hereafter." Take a good self-examination of your priorities TODAY!

Walking By Faith



Elwood Holt

A little girl in Sunday school was asked, "What is faith?" She replied, "believing what God said without asking any questions." We often times comment upon the frankness of our children and their unique ways of answering our questions. I think I could not give a better

definition of faith than the one given by the little girl. Truly it is believing what God says "without asking any questions." But, too many times we want to put ourselves up before God as authorities on various subjects, expecting that he succumb to our will in such matters, even though it means that he will have to forfeit his position on the subject. Will God do it? We may, at times, think that he will, but when we deliberate seriously, we know better. When God speaks we are not left with an opinion of our own.

His word is always the final authority and if we believe, we will accept it as such. Paul says in II Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by FAITH and not by SIGHT." Then, in the matter of religion, if a thing cannot be found in God's word it is not a matter of faith. Then the conclusion is, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). The New Testament lays great emphasis upon the importances of putting first things first. Humanity has a long-standing habit of showing these things

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"No Applause, Please"

Ricky Clay

The apostle Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (I Corinthians 15:10). Paul recognized one fact about the ability he had: it came from God. Paul accomplished so much in spreading the gospel.

Is it not true that "by the grace of God we are what we are"? No one would have any ability unless our Father in heaven had given it to us. God is truly the Giver of every good and every perfect gift (James 1:17).

But something else that Paul said should concern us equally as well. "And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain" (I Corinthians 15:10). Yes, Paul did so very much in God's service! He used his talents and abilities in furthering the Lord's church here upon the earth.

But something else that Paul said should concern us equally as well. "And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain" (I Corinthians 15:10).

It is wonderful to see so many that God has blessed so richly with talent. Some can use their vocabularies and literally charm the "horns off a bull." Others have such prominence and prestige with those around them that they can influence those lives for good. And some have the ability to put in long hours at the plant on an assembly line, or out in the fields doing manual labor. And frankly, what would we do without doctors, teachers and lawyers that bless our society with their skills (I Corinthians 7:20-24)?

We are what we are by the grace of God! But is

that grace bestowed in vain? Oh, how we all need to use whatever talents we may possess in the Lord's service. We must realize that Christians will always make a difference because that grace must not be bestowed in vain and as Christians we cannot do less than our best for Him who gave his best for us. Let us remember the words of Jesus found in Luke 17:10 which say, "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." "NO APPLAUSE, PLEASE."

Faith Of The Faithless

Steve Gunter

A prominent observer of our contemporary culture has noted that the trend of the past thirty years repudiates the false premise of secular humanism. Just as mankind has proven to be an excellent exterminator of species but the creator of none, so it is that humanistic philosophy "killed the gods" but found no moral system to replace the Word of God and its rich code of conduct.

Jeremiah said in the long ago, "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). Surely the twin evils of the twentieth century, Communism and Nazism, have demonstrated the truth of the prophet's teaching.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Christianity rejects the faith of the faithless humanist in favor of the Risen Savior, the proven Son of God, who is able to deliver us from ever besetting evil.

Walking By Faith

Continued From Page 2

in the background for things not nearly so important. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of heaven with its righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). When we faithfully put the Kingdom of the Lord, the Church, first, such things as material necessities will be added unto us. No fact is more clearly taught in the word than this. The church is to have first place.

Paul says in II Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by FAITH and not by SIGHT." Then, in the matter of religion, if a thing cannot be found in God's word it is not a matter of faith. Then the conclusion is, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). The New Testament lays great emphasis upon the importances of putting first things first.

God will not run second best to any person or anything. When the disciple told Jesus on one

occasion that His mother and brethren stood without, Jesus asked, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Then with a panoramic gesture he said, "Behold my brethren and my mother! For whosoever will do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:46-50). Jesus put matters pertaining to his KINGDOM before his own mother and brothers. We will do the same if we are truly converted to the worth of the church of the Living God. It is compared to the "pearl of great price" (Matthew 13:45). The merchant who found such a pearl sold all others and obtained it. The one who truly sees the worth of the Lord's church will sacrifice all else if necessary in order to have it in his own life. What allegiance we should render our Lord! What faith should be ours!

We should strive to be the kind of children the Prince of Peace expects us to be. This coming Lord's Day the faith of all God's children will be tried. The apostle exhorts us to "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). The one who forsakes the assembly does not have sufficient faith. That is his trouble -- the lack of faith. The place for fathers, mothers, boys and girls is in Bible school and the assemblies of the church. The entire Christian life is one of faith. What is faith? Think of the little girl's definition again. It is "believing what God says without asking any questions" **THY WORD IS TRUTH** (John 17:17).

Hitler, of course, lost World War II, but the philosophy of humanism won the war waged for the modern mind. Nietzsche, the fountainhead of modernism, remains highly regarded among the intelligentsia of our age. Unfortunately much of this humanist swagger has infiltrated thinking within the church, especially in our institutions of academic inquiry and learning.

It is the work of the church to point mankind to the great hope and light that is the Word of God. Truly scripture says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Christianity rejects the faith of the faithless humanist in favor of the Risen Savior, the proven Son of God, who is able to deliver us from every besetting evil.

--1202 Royal Drive, Bentonville, AR 72712.

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The "Old And New" Or The "Old Or New"

David Deffenbaugh

Understanding the right relationship between the Old and the New Testament has always posed difficulties in the church. From the time that non-Jews first began to respond to the Gospel there were Christians who questioned their right to do so, and others thought they ought to comply first with the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant (Acts 11:1-18; 15:1). It is not a new problem.

Current errors are made in two directions. One may decide that since we are under a new covenant through Christ, the Old Testament is therefore of little consequence. That attitude is not uncommon. It is error. Closely akin to this and equally erroneous is the approach that emphasizes the law system of the old and the grace found in the new. It appears that the conclusion sometimes reached is that law and grace are mutually exclusive of each other (they are not), and therefore the old is inferior and deserves little attention. This too is error.

If the old is truly the shadow of things to come in the new (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10!), then won't we better understand the new when we understand that which foreshadows it?

In the other direction there may be a failure to recognize the difference between the old and new covenants. This may lead one to attempt to bind the stipulations of the old covenant (or at least selected portions of it) when it is no longer in effect.

On the one hand there is a need to avoid a wrong conclusion. Just because the old covenant has been fulfilled and set aside does not mean that it is to be thrown out or neglected. Paul referred to it as that which gives "wisdom" that leads to salvation (II Timothy 3:15). Also Paul affirms that God intended for the Old Testament to be for the instruction of Christians and the instilling of hope (Romans 15:4). Shall we neglect that which God has intended for our benefit? And although the old covenant could only justify by law keeping that was not its purpose (to produce a nation of legalist law keepers), but rather justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matthew 23:23; Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Micah 6:8).

On the other hand, understanding the distinction between the two covenants is greatly needed. God promised a new covenant even while the old was still in effect (Jeremiah 31:31). Jesus is the mediator of that new and better covenant (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). It is folly to attempt to bind any of the stipulations of the old which has been fulfilled and taken out of the way (Matthew 5:17; Colossians 2:14).

The value of the Old Testament is incomparable

as it shows us God for the first time revealing himself by written revelation through Moses to a nation of former slaves whom he had chosen to be his own. We learn much about what it means to be in a covenant relationship with God as we witness his covenant relationship with Israel. If the old is truly the shadow of things to come in the new

(Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10!), then won't we better understand the new when we understand that which foreshadows it?

Read, study, appreciate, and benefit from the Old Testament!

--Harrison, AR.

Refutation Of An Objection Based On I Corinthians 1:17

Garland Elkins

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (I Corinthians 1:17). The first part of the verse, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," is the part of the verse that has been distorted, twisted and perverted by those who do not believe the truth as set out by our Lord Jesus Christ in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Paul said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I have baptized in mine own name" (Emp. mine, G.E., I Corinthians 1:14, 15). This explains why Paul was glad that he baptized but few in Corinth. Incidentally, Paul did not say that he was glad that few in Corinth were baptized. The truth is that many were baptized at Corinth, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord with all his house: And many (Emp. mine, G. E.) of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

The brethren at Corinth, by the time Paul wrote, were factious and prone to call each other after the name of the preacher who baptized them. Paul was happy that he had baptized but few of them (not because he considered baptism non-essential), but, "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name" (Emp. mine, G. E.).

Paul was happy that he had baptized but few of them (not because he considered baptism non-essential) but, "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name."

Paul neither says nor implies that baptism is no part of the gospel. Yet that is what false teachers charge him with teaching. They say Paul was not sent to baptize; then they erroneously conclude that baptism is no part of the gospel. In reaching this conclusion they pervert, twist, and abuse the passage. **They deliberately change the verb baptize, into the noun baptism!** The truth is set out in the passage: Paul was sent to preach the gospel. Paul was not sent to baptize, i.e. the mere act of baptizing is no part of preaching the gospel.

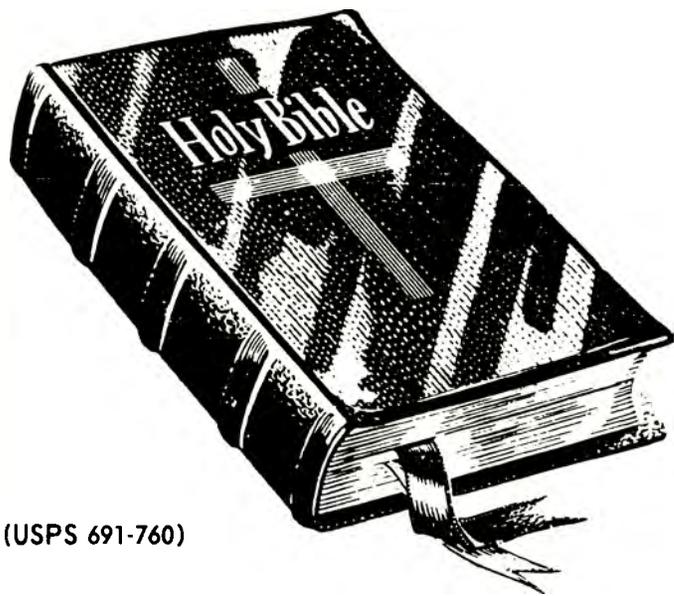
That is, when Paul preached he always taught that baptism was necessary (Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:27), but he did not always do all of the baptizing with his own hands. This, Paul's fellow-preachers could, and did, do. Paul did not say that he was happy that but few had been baptized in Corinth, (in fact he said the opposite, i.e. he taught one could not be saved without baptism), for he taught in I Corinthians 1:13, "For by one Spirit are we all (emp. mine, G.E.) baptized into one body." However, under the existing circumstances he was glad that he had not with his own hands baptized many in Corinth. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other" (I Corinthians 1:14, 16). Paul did baptize some at Corinth, and when he did, he baptized them into the name of Christ (I Corinthians 1:12-16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26, 27).

The Bible makes clear that it is the case that baptism is absolutely necessary in order for the alien sinner to be forgiven of his past sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21). The apostles could and did baptize (Matthew 28:19), but they were not sent always to perform the act themselves; hence they could have others do it. Paul, as did the other apostles, also had authority to baptize, and did baptize some at Corinth.

The Bible makes clear that it is the case that baptism is absolutely necessary in order for the alien sinner to be forgiven of his past sins.

No false teacher can set aside Paul's arguments in I Corinthians 1:12-16, which show that no accountable person can belong to Christ until he is baptized. The only way a false teacher can "muddy the water," in reply to the truth set out in the above passage, is to seek to array scripture against scripture, to use one scripture to deny another. This type of abuse of scripture is to be greatly deplored. All who do this wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:15, 16).

--4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118.



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Words of Truth

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"RU4-It"?

Neal Pollard

"RU 486" is the latest choice introduced to this country, with this particular option borne of a French alternative. Although Judge Clarence Thomas reversed a court order July fourteenth that returned the "abortion pills" to a young woman taking them to induce infanticide, the ranting continues in a sector of our society. Our peers in the left wing of America are asking the presidential candidates with regard to the matter of pro-choice: "ARE YOU FOR IT?"

These individuals contend that Americans have the right to surgically remove the fetus from the womb. They now contend that Americans have the right to take pills which abort fetuses at their discretion. The burning question then becomes, "DO THEY?"

I believe the question is not just one of rights, but also one of consistency. If the rights aforementioned are granted, why can not our country pass out the following rights:

1. The right to end the lives of infants who, because of illness, become mentally handicapped?
2. The right to facilitate the expiration of the elderly whose medical disadvantages become a burden to attending family and physicians?
3. The right to remove societies' burdens and eyesores, which our homeless, diseased, destitute, and challenged individuals are sometimes regarded?

WHY NOT?

Is not every opinion or value worthless if it cannot be followed to its natural conclusion? For if the burning requests of abortion are satisfied, a precedent is set in place. And, if such radical legislation begins to serve as an example of justification for later introductions, how far are we willing to go?

The irony of this matter is that "pro-choice" advocates are crying out for consistency from their opponents. They believe that pro-life members, who support our constitution's way of government, contradict the "values" of our first and second amendments. They see glowing inconsistency

because "pro-life" undermines the rights of the individual.

Is not every opinion or value worthless if it cannot be followed to its natural conclusion? For if the burning requests of abortion are satisfied, a precedent is set in place. And, if such radical legislation begins to serve as an example of justification for later introductions, how far are we willing to go?

Let us observe a couple of principles that ought to take top priority:

1. Romans 13:1-7 is an inspired commentary on the Christian's responsibility to government. The Christian is obligated to be subject to powers "ordained of God." However, does Romans 13 place no limit on government's right to rule? When should government ethics yield to the higher ethics of God? Should not honor and fear (respect) be given to God over civil authorities when the two are in disagreement? Are we not to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33)? The golden text of God reveals that, at times when God's thought and ways differ from man's, we should follow the higher of the two (Isaiah 55:8-9). Paul wrote to the church in the town where he would later lose his life for angering government by preaching Christ. Was he endorsing or supporting civil court power to kill Christians? If so, we regard his conversion as vanity. Remember, Paul repented of persecuting the church of Christ in view of a higher law (Colossians 3:1-4).

2. How does God regard the fetus? As is the case

with much of the Bible's legislation, no explicit command is given on abortion. That is, the Bible truly does not say, "Thou shalt not have an abortion." However, when Bible principles and examples are examined, the Biblical stance on this hot topic is clearly evident. We cite an often-viewed passage in Jeremiah. God reviews the life of the prophet and exclaims, "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). Here, we have a known, sanctified, and ordained prophet whose mission was foreseen by God through omniscient eyes. How many potential preachers, teachers, elders, deacons, and Christians were cut down before their life and potential work was overruled by man's choice? Suppose that Mary, who asserted herself as the Lord's handmaid (Luke 1:38), had disregarded the "fruit of her womb" (Luke 1:42)? She had the same potential choice or power over her body, or did she?

God reviews the life of the prophet and exclaims, "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). . . How many potential preachers, teachers, elders, deacons, and Christians were cut down before their life and potential work was overruled by man's choice?

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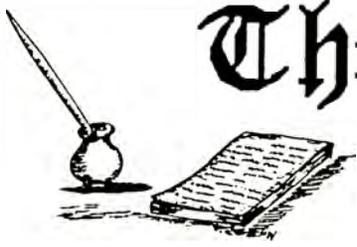
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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.



What Kind Of Christian Are You?



Jerry Jenkins

Today's GUEST EDITORIAL by my good friend and brother in the Lord, Jerry Jenkins is right from the shoulders, no holds barred! We all need a self examination from time to time. I appreciate Jerry, his work and especially at this time this good article. JTS

When I was in my teens and starting to preach at various rural churches in North Alabama someone gave me a book entitled, Sermon Outlines, by A. J. Bachman. One sermon in the book raised the question of this article, i.e., "What Kind of a Christian Are You?" In flagrant violation of sermonology the sermon contains 32 points. Each of these points discusses a type of Christian. For example, are you a Wheelbarrow-Christian who always has to be pushed, a Hibernating-Christian who is seasonal, a Jawbone-Christian who is always speaking out of turn, a Chameleon-Christian who determines right by circumstances, or a Big-Meeting-Christian who attends only on special occasions?

In a similar vein, William Barclay, a liberal theologian, discusses the Pharisees as depicted in the Talmud at the time of Jesus. He indicates that the Pharisees were dedicated legalists who attempted to observe every detail of the law. Naturally, being liberal in his religion, he condemns any attempt to carefully observe regulation; but he commends the Pharisees for being desperately earnest about their religion. He next discusses the Pharisees much from the viewpoint that A. J. Bachman did with Christians.

Using Barclay's perspective, I want to look at some different types of Christians and ask readers

to respond to the question, "Which kind of Christian am I?" First, there is the Shoulder Christian. He is the kind of Christian who wears his good deeds on his shoulder. He is determined to sustain a reputation for purity and goodness. He is motivated by any religious deed by how it will affect his reputation. If he is recognized publicly, with his name specifically mentioned from the pulpit or in the bulletin, he will favorably respond.

A second type of Christian might be the Wait-a-Little Christian. Such a Christian always produces an entirely valid excuse for putting off a good deed. He does not just unequivocally refuse to serve, but now is never a convenient time. His excuses seem legitimate -- such as, illness in the family, work schedule, more time with the kids; but upon closer examination one finds that he is involved many hours weekly with his hobby, his work with his slow-pitch team, or his children's t-ball.

A third category of Christians might be variously described as the Pestle and Mortar Christian, or the Humpback Christian. Such persons walk in such an ostentatious humility that they are bent like a pestle in a mortar, or like a humpback. They are keenly aware of their humility, for they often speak openly of it. This self-advertising ostentation makes them appear so pious that everyone is afraid to cross any statement they make. Therefore, in Bible classes and business meetings they have the last word.

Finally there is the God-fearing Christian. He/she is the one who really and truly loves God, finds delight in serving others, and can be counted on for every good work. Their actions often go unnoticed by the masses, but the Lord (who takes note of an insignificant cup of water) is well aware of their good deeds. Their service is not with a frown, for they delight in serving others. **WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIAN ARE YOU?**

--400 Roebuck Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35261.

"RU4-It"?

Continued From Page 1

David, with the help of the Spirit, said, "My substance was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret, and intricately wrought in the lowest parts of the earth" (Psalm 139:15). If his substance was not his fetus, what was it? If he was not MADE at conception (which is a secret and sacred right from God), when was he made? At birth? All the scriptures point to the identity of the unborn, but living, fetus.

As of today, "RU 486" remains off the shelf of American pharmacies and out of the hands of our doctors. Yet, abortion is not only still legal, but potentially available with the fewest restrictions ever seen in this great land. Let us pray that consistency will lead men back to an allegiance to God's will.

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

Beware Of The Wagging Tongue



Dalton Key

began to beat upon the nest with all his might but

The story is told of a man, who while walking along a country road, spotted a small, curious-looking creature. Supposing the little varmint needed killing, he picked up a stick and struck it across the back. To the man's surprise, the creature immediately doubled in size. He then

the harder he beat, the larger it grew. He got a larger stick and continued to flail at the beast, but the more he thrashed it about, the more it grew -- until finally its body filled the road. Thoroughly exhausted, the man stopped. And a strange thing happened. When he stopped beating it, the creature shrank smaller and smaller, until eventually it was gone.

The creature's name? Rumor. Yes, the beast which grew when agitated and shrank when ignored, was rumor.

The foregoing bit of fiction, which has made the rounds through many a church bulletin over the

years, reveals an important and oft-needed truth. Few things can be as deceptively destructive as a rampant rumor. As goes the maxim, "Trying to squash a rumor is like trying to unring a bell."

Families have been divided, friendships have been severed, relationships have been forever soiled -- and why? For no reason other than a gossiping tongue.

Solomon observed, "Where there is no wood, a fire goes out; and where there is no whisperer, a quarrel goes down" (Philippians 26:20

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The Mercy Seat And Christ



W. Gaddys Roy The mercy-seat was made of pure gold (Exodus 25:11). It covered the ark of the covenant which contained the tables of stone on which the law was written for Israel (Hebrews 9:4). Jesus came to earth and lived a pure and sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 2:22). Jesus fulfilled the law that was given to Israel. He took it out of the way and gave us a better covenant with better

promises (Colossians 2:14-16; Matthew 5:17, 18; Galatians 3:22-25; Hebrews 8:6). Just as Israel was governed by the law written on the tables of stone, Christians are governed by the law of Christ written on the heart (II Corinthians 3:3), and we must hearken unto all things spoken by Christ (Galatians 6:2; Matthew 17:5; Acts 3:22, 23; Hebrews 1:1, 2).

Just as Israel was governed by the law written on the tables of stone, Christians are governed by the law of Christ written on the heart (II Corinthians 3:3), and we must hearken unto all things spoken by Christ

The mercy-seat was overshadowed by cherubims of glory (Hebrews 9:5). These cherubims were likely symbolic of the angels who are sent to minister to the saints (Hebrews 1:14). We may not know all that these cherubims represent, but there is one thing certain -- angels were interested in the redemptive work of Jesus. Angels announced the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:8-16). Angels were at the command of Jesus while He was on earth. After He was arrested in Gethsemane, He said that he could pray the Father and He would give Him "more than twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53). When Jesus was raised from the dead, an angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre (Matthew 28:2). As the apostles stood gazing up into heaven when Jesus ascended to the "ancient of days," two angels announced His second coming (Acts 1:10, 11). Angels bear the souls of the righteous to paradise upon the death of the body (Luke 16:19-31). When Jesus makes His second advent, angels will be with Him to gather together his elect and to sever the righteous from the wicked (Matthew 13:41, 42; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31-33; II Thessalonians 1:6-9).

God communed with Moses for Israel from above the mercy-seat. It was from the mercy-seat that God revealed His mind and will to Moses (Exodus 25:17-22). The only way that we can approach God and be reconciled to Him is through Christ (Colossians 3:17; II Corinthians 5:17-21). God reveals His mind to us through Christ (Hebrews 1:1, 2; Matthew 17:1-5).

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At the mercy-seat, prayers and offerings were presented to God. Once a year the high priest would sprinkle blood on the mercy-seat for an atonement for his sins and the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:11-16; Hebrews 9:7). It is only through Christ that we have access to God (John 14:6; 16:23; Colossians 3:17). Jesus is the door to all spiritual blessings (John 10:9; Ephesians 1:3). Jesus made one atonement, not for Himself, for He had no sin, but for the sins of the whole world when He offered Himself (Hebrews 10:9, 10; I Peter 1:18-23; Ephesians 1:7). It was not necessary for Jesus to make but one sacrifice because He was a perfect sacrifice. In the Old Testament, neither the priests nor their sacrifices were perfect. Therefore, their sacrifices had to be offered continually.

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Beware Of The Wagging Tongue

Continued From Page 2

Goodspeed).

Socrates may have had the right idea along this line. A man is said to have once walked up to Socrates and said, "Have you heard, O Socrates

Few things can be as deceptively destructive as a rampant rumor. As goes the maxim, "Trying to squash a rumor is like trying to unring a bell."

... "Just a moment, friend," replied the sage. "Have you made sure that all you are going to tell me is true?" "Well no. I just heard others say it." "I see. Then we can scarcely bother with it unless it is something good. Will it stand the test of goodness?" "Oh, no indeed. On the contrary." "Hmm. Perhaps, somehow it is necessary that I know this in order to prevent harm to others." "Well, no . . ." "Very well, then," said Socrates, "Let us forget about it. There are many worthless things in life; we can't afford to bother with what is so worthless as to be neither true nor good nor needful."

The words of Ephesians 4:29-32 are sorely needed in our day of loose language: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

--801 N.E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

Learn From The Devil

Blake Nicholas

Through the inspired writers of the New Testament, God instructed us to be diligent in our efforts to live the Christian life.

"And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; to virtue knowledge; . . ." (II Peter 1:5). "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10).

The life of the Christian must be a life of dedicated work for the Lord. Yet many who become Christians take this commandment lightly, and do not live each day for the Lord as the Christian should.

Throughout time, God's people have often hesitated, or found something else to do besides the work the Lord would have them to do. In the writing of Haggai, God rebuked the people for doing everything except His work, and instructed them to get busy building up his house (Haggai 1:1-8).

Hugh Latimer, an Anglican preacher of the 16th Century, was extremely distressed with many of his day who were doing everything except what he perceived to be the work of the church that they were supposed to be doing. In his most famous address, "The Sermon Of The Plough," he stressed the need of laboring for God in all seasons of the

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Caleb Wholly Followed Jehovah

Kenneth McClain

When Moses sent the twelve spies to spy out the land of Canaan and see if the Israelites might take the land, Caleb was one who said, "We can." Only Joshua and Caleb brought back a good report and urged the people to go up at once, and with God's help, take the land. The other ten spies were afraid and thought of themselves as "grasshoppers" in the sight of those who inhabited the land. The Israelites failed to listen to Joshua and Caleb, so God punished them and caused them to wander in the wilderness for forty years because of their fear and lack of faith. After they wandered in the great wilderness, we find that Caleb still remembered a promise which had been made to him by Moses concerning land which he had inherited. In Joshua 14:6-13 we find that Caleb reminded Joshua of that promise. The life of Caleb can be characterized as one of great courage and faithfulness to Jehovah.

It was at Kadesh-barnea that Jehovah instructed Israel to march into the promise land and fight against the Amorites. However, the Israelites were afraid and decided to send the twelve spies to see what the land and the people were like. The twelve spies returned after forty days carrying a large cluster of grapes and other fruits from the Valley of Eschol, but only Caleb and Joshua were unafraid to do battle against the Amorites. Israel's lack of faith and unwillingness to obey God provoked His anger and He caused them to wander forty years in the wilderness. God was not displeased with Joshua and Caleb, but with the actions of the others of that generation He was highly displeased.

Caleb was to inherit the land upon which he had walked forty years earlier as one of the spies. Caleb, after forty years of grueling wandering, still had this promise strongly embedded in his mind when he came with the people before Joshua in Gilgal.

Caleb had the spirit of cooperation, "Let us go up." He did not say, "Let me go up," but, "Let us go up." Think of how much work we could do for the Lord if faithful brethren worked side by side.

After forty years in the wilderness, Caleb at the age of 85, was ready to take the land even though the giants were still there. His faith in Jehovah never wavered during that forty year period of hardship in the wilderness. His great faith in the Lord should inspire us today. Like Paul, we should say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Caleb's faith was like that displayed by David many years later. "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy

servant will go and fight with this Philistine . . . the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (I Samuel 17:32, 37). Caleb had the spirit of cooperation, "Let us go up." He did not say, "Let me go up," but, "Let us go up." Think of how much work we could do for the Lord if faithful brethren worked side by side. Caleb had optimism and enthusiasm -- "Let us arise and go up at once and possess it."

Certainly we must properly plan the Lord's work;

but there must come a time for action and deeds. In Caleb and Joshua we see some great characteristics that are so desperately needed in God's people today! Let us be like Caleb who always followed Jehovah. When we follow the Lord, we will build better families, better communities, and make a significant contribution to the next generation. Regardless of others and their destiny, we will receive the eternal promised land that is Heaven if we also will "follow the Lord."

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203.

Learn From The Devil

Continued From Page 3

year. He then said the following words: "And now I would ask you, who is the most diligent. . . in all England; that passes all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know who it is; I know him well . . . There is one that passes all the other, and is the most diligent . . . preacher in all England. And will you know who it is? I will tell you -- it is the Devil."

Latimer then described the work of the devil, how that he is constantly involved in his evil endeavors, diligently working to cause one to be lost.

His message is a lesson that we all need today: we must be diligently working to build up the church of our Lord, because those who are against it are ever working to do it harm. Many today, as in the days of Haggai place their own lives and belongings, and many other things ahead of doing the work of the Lord. We become so caught up in our own selfish pursuits that we forget the truly important work that we must be doing if we are to please God.

Latimer closed his sermon with these sobering words, "Therefore learn of the devil . . . to be

diligent in doing your office. If you will not learn of God, nor good men, to be diligent in your office, learn of the devil."

Just as the devil is diligently "seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8), we must be daily involved in diligently seeking God (Hebrews 11:6), and those who are lost (Luke 19:10; Matthew 28:18-20).

Just as the devil is diligently "seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8), we must be daily involved in diligently seeking God (Hebrews 11:6), and those who are lost (Luke 19:10; Matthew 28:18-20).

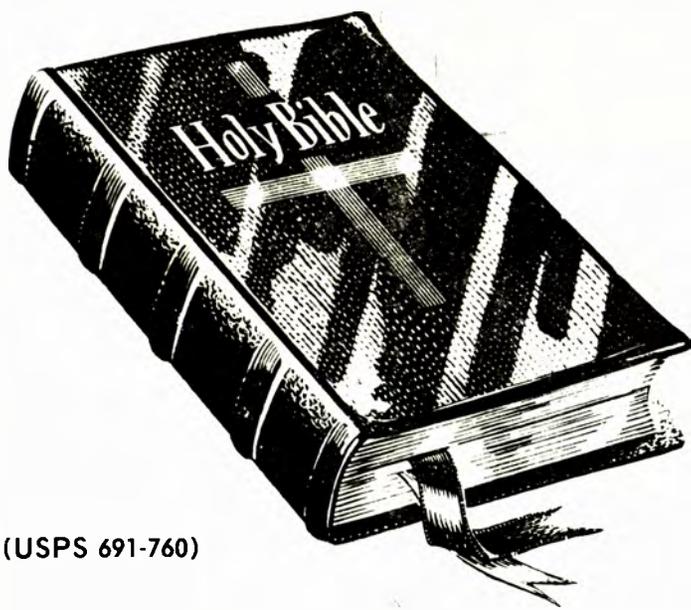
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"I am not mad, most noble Festus. My words are words of Truth and soberness."

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ts 26:25

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If He Had Meant It!

Albert Gardner

"Yes, I know the Bible says that but the Lord didn't mean that." So very often gospel preachers hear something equal to the above statement. They realize that the Bible says a certain thing but do not believe it is important, binding, or necessary.

One lady told me that even thou Mark 9:1 says, "That 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" that it surely could not mean that the kingdom came during the lifetime of some that heard that statement. She realized that it SAID it, but she did not want to accept it. You see, she held to the false doctrine that the kingdom started in 1914. I just had to ask her what words the Lord would have used if he had meant that they would "not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." That is what he SAID. This lady said Jesus did not mean that. He meant something else. Just suppose he had meant what he said -- what words would he have used? How would he have gotten it over to us? Since words are signs of ideas and Jesus used words to express his ideas we will only know what he means by what he says.

IF HE HAD MEANT that baptism is a burial, how would he have said it? He said, "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). "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16). When Philip baptized the eunuch, "they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38). By plain statement and example we learn that baptism is a burial. Many are saying, "It does not mean that." Suppose the Lord had meant that, how would he have said it? Could it have been any plainer if he had meant it?

IF THE LORD HAD MEANT that the church is important and that we must be in it to be saved, what words would he have used? He said, (1) the

church is the body, (Ephesians 1:22, 23) and (2) "that he is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). Suppose we treat the church lightly, neglect its worship and work and then on the Judgment Day we learn that the Lord did mean what he said!!! It is too serious to take lightly.

IF THE LORD HAD MEANT to put the church first, how would he have said it? He said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

IF THE LORD HAD MEANT to say that the law of Moses is no longer in force, how would he have done it? Here is what he did say: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14). An inspired apostle said it. Many will tell us that the law is still binding -- that the apostle did not mean that Jesus "took it out of the way." How could

words be plainer?

Jesus and the Bible writers used the right words to express the right ideas. Paul says, "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:13). They were not reckless in their writing. They did not "rush into print" just to have a good story. They presented facts. They told the truth. It was really the truth that Jesus walked on the water. Jesus really did rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. They had the facts. They used the words to express exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted to get over to us.

If the LORD DID NOT MEAN what he SAID, how can we be sure that his words have any meaning? If they do not mean what they say, who is to say what they mean? It is fatal to try to change the word of God by giving it a meaning that the writer never intended. "If any man preach any other gospel . . . let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9).

Yeah, Part Right

Howard R. Horton

There is a lot being said today about grace and about being saved 100% by it. Well, they are "part right." However, being "part right" is just as bad as being all wrong, in the eyes of a Holy and Just God.

We humans did nothing at all, not one single thing, in order to get God and His Son, Jesus Christ, to offer us a way to be saved and an atonement for our sins in order that God the Father could still maintain His holiness in forgiving us. This "offering of salvation" to mankind was totally, in every way, by 100% of God's grace. By God's mercy we (humans) have been given a way, a new and living way, to draw near to God; and, it is because of God's mercy and God's grace.

However, in order to enjoy this grace we must

believe and obey the Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24). This belief and obedience in no way, no way at all, takes away from God's grace and God's mercy. God was merciful in offering us a way to be saved, and we obtain that salvation by belief and obedience to the Gospel of the grace of God. Simply put: "Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

Titus 3:5 informs us, through inspiration, that we are saved by God's mercy. In other words, God was merciful in OFFERING us salvation. We didn't do anything to obligate Heaven in offering

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—Acts 26:25

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

God Hates Lying



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

A small girl returned to the waiting salesman, "My momma said to tell you that she was not home." The secretary, after seeing the negative nod of the employer, said into the telephone, "I'm sorry, but Mr. Smith is out of the office at the present time."

How often scenes like the above are repeated! It seems that truth is not as precious as once it was! The truth is wrecklessly handled by many, and all too often by those who are members of the body of Christ.

Solomon said in Proverbs 6:16-19 that there are seven things which are abominations in the sight of the Lord. One of the seven is "a lying tongue." A definition of lying is, "The utterance by speech or act of that which is false with the intent to mislead or delude. Used to designate all the ways in which men deny or alter the truth in word or deed."

Much is said about lying in the Old Testament in addition to the fact that God hates lying (Proverbs 6). The ninth of the ten commandments that God gave unto Moses is against lying, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). "Let the lying lips be put to silence" (Psalms 31:18). "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue" (Psalm 120:2). "A righteous man hateth lying" (Proverbs 13:5). ". . . neither lie one to another" (Leviticus 19:11).

The New Testament abounds with warnings against lying. Satan is called a liar and the father of it (John 8:44). Jesus said ". . . out of the heart proceed evil thoughts . . . false witness . . ." (Matthew 15:19). "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor"

(Ephesians 4:25).

The company that is kept by liars reveals that it is totally wrong and sinful. Lying is included in the seven things which God hates (Proverbs 6). In I Timothy 1:9, 10 Paul includes liars with "the lawless and disobedient . . . ungodly and sinners . . . unholy and profane . . . murderers of fathers and mothers . . . manslayers, whoremongers, them that defile themselves with mankind, menstealers and perjured persons . . ." The company mentioned in Revelation 21:8 should help one decided that lying is incompatible with the nature of a child of God. Certainly it is incompatible with the very nature of God "that cannot lie" (Titus 1:2).

In seeking to relocate, a preacher told an eldership that the congregation where he was presently employed was having such problems that they had employed some eight preachers in the past ten years. The truth of the matter is that the congregation had only four preachers (excluding meetings) in the past fourteen years. Preaching brethren, we who preach need to be certain that we do not handle the truth in a light-handed way. We should not tell something that we know to be wrong, or something that is COLORED to our benefit. The Rotary Club has the FOUR WAY TEST which is often repeated at club meetings. 1. IS IT TRUE? 2. IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED? 3. WILL IT BUILD GOOD WILL AND BETTER RELATIONSHIPS? 4. WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERNED? Surely these are questions that people of God should be concerned with!

Paul told the Romans "I say the truth in Christ, I LIE NOT" (9:1). Let us heed his admonition to the Colossians, "LIE NOT one to another, SEEING YE HAVE PUT OFF THE OLD MAN WITH HIS DEEDS; and HAVE PUT ON THE NEW MAN which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (3:9).

A Cappella



John Gipson

Church music. Without accompaniment. That's "a cappella." "A cappella" comes from the Latin, ad, to, according to, and capella, chapel. "A cappella" is the style of church or chapel music.

But the term "a cappella" could hardly be applied to the music heard in most churches today. That which used to be the only means of praising God in church (a cappella), is seldom seen in most houses of worship today.

The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Even Gregory the Great, who toward the end of the sixth century added greatly to the existing Christian music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments.

When Everett Ferguson was doing his graduate study at Harvard University he lived in the same dormitory with a Greek Orthodox student who was a graduate of the University of Athens (Greece) and a candidate for an advanced degree at Harvard. Everett asked him if it was correct that the Greek Orthodox churches did not use instrumental music in their public worship. He said, "Yes." When he

Continued on page 3

Faith

Leon Cole

Some years ago I read a story of a man who lost his business in the years of the great depression. It also looked as if he would lose the house where the family had always lived. This was a popular family and the whole community was hurt over the plight of these people. One asked the man, "What on earth are you all going to do now?" The answer was simple, "We are going to practice the faith that we have been professing all of our lives."

Practicing faith is an everyday occurrence.

Somehow it seems that we have developed the idea that practicing faith only involves worshipping during church services. That may give faith a lift, but we are to employ our faith all the time.

We practice faith as we open our eyes and ears to what good people of faith have learned over the years. It helps us avoid such mistakes and to also learn certain spiritual truths. Look to the eleventh

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Human Life Vs. Baboon's Life



Joe E. Galloway

Network news has featured the first transplant of a baboon's liver into a human being. The man was dying, due to his own liver being destroyed by hepatitis B. It is hoped that newer techniques, along with proper combinations of anti-rejection drugs, will see him successfully

through the natural attempt of the body to reject this non-human organ.

But, barely had the news come until we are shown the animal-rights activists demonstrating in the area of the University of Pittsburg Medical Center where the transplant was performed. They objected that an animal, a baboon, was killed for that purpose!

How mixed up today's godless society has become when some can accept the murder, by abortion, of 1-1/2 to 2 million innocent human lives each year in our nation, but object to the killing of animals to help save human life! How perverted is the value system of many!

When God made man he gave him dominion over all animal life (Genesis 1:26, 28; 9:2). God expected man to properly care for animals (Deuteronomy 25:4), but it is evident throughout the Bible that animals were made for man's use and benefit. Man is not prohibited from killing

animals as he is from killing humans, for the obvious reason that man is a superior being to animals. Man is made in the likeness of God (Genesis 1:17); animals are not! Man is a reasoning being, possessing a spirit which shall never die; animals are wholly temporal.

Two groups have tried to place animals on a par with man, and both have rejected God and the Bible: (1) Those teaching reincarnation (e.g. the Hindu religion) believe that animals may contain the reincarnated spirits of humans, so they fear killing any kind of animal. This is the reason cattle roam freely in India, contributing little if anything to that society, while millions of humans go hungry. (2) Evolutionists believe man to simply be a more advanced form of animal life, so many of them oppose killing animals, especially those they consider to be nearer to our form of life. This explains the great concern for the baboon that died for the liver transplant.

Christians need to understand the vast difference between the emphasis the world makes on animal life and what the Bible teaches. Otherwise we may find ourselves unwittingly joining unbelievers in promoting a value system that is in direct opposition to Bible teaching. While we should not condone cruelty to animals, nor the senseless wasting of animals to pamper the vanity of some (such as the extermination of elephants, simply to get ivory from their tusks), we do need to recognize that God made animals for the good of mankind! Using them for food, work, medical research, and other good uses, us just as right as

using them as pets. Even when keeping animals as pets, let us never let our feelings carry us away from Bible truth by causing us to think of animals in ways intended only for humans.

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

A Cappella

Continued from page 2

was asked for the reasons for such action, he replied: "We do not use instrumental music because it is not in the New Testament and it is contrary to the nature of Christian worship."

Under the Old Testament, instruments of music certainly had a part to play in the worship of God. But when one comes to the New Testament they are not mentioned. The nature of Christian worship was spiritual. Thus, even those who had formerly used the instrument failed to adopt it in primitive Christian worship. In fact, the general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Even Gregory the Great, who toward the end of the sixth century added greatly to the existing Christian music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments.

Chrysostom gives us a picture of what Christian worship was like up to the fifth century. "It was the ancient custom, as it still is with us, for all to come together, and unitedly to join in singing. The young and the old, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, all join in one song . . . All worldly distinctions here cease, and the whole congregation form one general chorus."

In the words of the apostle Paul, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:16, 17).

--P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Yeah, Part Right

Continued from page 1

us a way to be saved; but, once Heaven offers us salvation (because of Heaven's mercy) we must believe it and obey it! This, the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," is done when a person culminates his salvation in baptism, after having believed (John 3:16; Hebrews 2:1, 6), having repented (Acts 2:38; II Peter 3:9), and having confessed Christ (Matthew 10:31ff; Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37).

In order to enjoy this grace we must believe and obey the Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24). This belief and obedience in no way, no way at all, takes away from God's grace and God's mercy,

So, when someone tries to make you believe that we are saved 100% by grace a-l-o-n-e, ask them what they mean by "alone?" God's offering us a way to be saved was by His grace and mercy. We

(humans) had no part in His offering us the New Testament. However, man's part isn't affected by just the fact that God offered us salvation. Man must accept this salvation, believe this salvation, obey this salvation and remain in this salvation in order for God's grace to work for us. Simply put, as far as men and women are concerned, if we don't believe and obey the Gospel of the grace of God, we will be lost . . . 100% lost! Regardless of the gracious fact that God, through His grace and mercy, offered us a way to be forgiven, to be saved.

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Would Jesus Cleanse The Temple Again?

Gary Workman

On Monday before Jesus' crucifixion, he entered into "the temple of God" (Matthew 21:12), where he found sacrificial animals for sale. He then physically ejected the buyers, sellers, and moneychangers and threw their possessions to the floor. This second cleansing of the temple was preceded by a similar action three years earlier, prompted by his zeal for the Lord's house (John 2:13-18).

What was it that so outraged the Lord? The answer is clear -- it was their perversion of God's purpose for the temple. That temple was designed to be "a house of prayer (Isaiah 56:7). But by turning it into "a house of merchandise" (John 2:16) they, in effect, made it "a den of robbers"(Matthew 21:13)! And God himself was their victim (Jeremiah 7:8-11).

The buying and selling and moneychanging was not wrong in itself, but the temple was not the place to do it. They failed to "make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane (common) place" (Ezekiel 42:20). But Jesus would not even allow anyone to carry a container through the temple (Mark 11:16). Their usage of the temple was convenient, and even helpful in providing for worship, but it was wrong!

In like manner, more and more congregations today are profaning the current "house of God, which is the church" (I Timothy 3:15), that spiritual temple which must not be desecrated (I Corinthians 3:16). We speak not of what someone might do in the meeting-house, but of a perversion of the church's rightful purpose and work.

Preachers need to 'dust off' those sermons of yesteryear that are not used much nowadays and teach them with renewed fervor about the authority of the Scriptures and their application to the church's work. And elders need to firmly insist to a sometimes uninformed membership that the church has no business dabbling in the secular pursuits of politics or playrooms.

The church is to carry on with the unfinished work of Christ (John 14:12). His mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and that must be our mission too (John 17:18). We are a special people called for a special purpose (I Peter 2:9, 10), a spiritual house commanded to do spiritual work (I Peter 2:5). And just as Jesus carried out his mission in three ways -- preaching, teaching and healing (Matthew 9:35), so all church work must

likewise be limited to evangelism, edification (including worship), and benevolence. The church is authorized to work in no other areas. But these are enough!

Preachers need to 'dust off' those sermons of yesteryear that are not used much nowadays and teach them with renewed fervor about the authority of the Scriptures and their application to the church's work. And elders need to firmly insist to a sometimes uninformed membership that the church has no business dabbling in the secular pursuits of politics or playrooms. The Spirit anointed work of Jesus (Luke 4:18, 19) is also that which was given to the church (Romans 12:6-8). And we must not be diverted from our task.

There is a biblical distinction between the action of Christian individuals and that of the church, itself (I Timothy 5:16). This is because there is a difference between what is God's and what is the government's (Matthew 22:21) or an individual's.

Faith

Continued from page 2

chapter of Hebrews and see how the heroes and heroines of the Old Testament provide the solid ground of faith for things hoped for and the conviction of unseen realities. Encircled by this cloud of witness we must take heart and go forward.

Involved in practicing faith is the matter of discipline. Hebrews 12:1 urges us to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us." This means that we drop anything that slows down our walking by faith.

Involved in practicing faith is the matter of discipline. Hebrews 12:1 urges us to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us." This means that we drop anything that slows down our walking by faith.

Faith means we always look beyond ourselves, "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our

Everything ultimately belongs to God, but He chooses to give to us (Acts 14:17; James 1:17). Ananias' money was "his own" until he gave it back to the Lord (Acts 5:4). Such failure to distinguish between the secular and the sacred caused the Corinthians to pervert the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20-22, 34).

Remember that Jesus' kingdom is "not of this world" (John 18:36) and must not be improperly entangled in "the affairs of this life" (II Timothy 2:4). The church is a divine organism with a two-fold trust: to guard the truth (I Timothy 3:15) and proclaim it to all men (Ephesians 3:8, 9). This was God's "eternal purpose" for the church (Ephesians 3:10, 11), and we must not violate its glory (Ephesians 3:21). Let us not, therefore, rob God by profaning its mission. If Jesus were here on earth today, would he cleanse his temple again!

--1021 Via Del Rey, Mesquit, TX 75150.

faith" (Hebrews 12:2). As we look unto him, he always gives and completes our faith.

We learn from him how to take suffering. He "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). We often wear the cross as an item of jewelry, but for Jesus it was all shame. But he could look beyond the shame because of the joy of obeying the Father. He knew what the real world was and died so we might, through faith, have eternal life in that real world -- HEAVEN.

Our faith is always lifted as we consider Jesus. As we think of him we will not mind hard lessons that come to us. We are sometimes chastened by God in order that "we might be partakers of his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10). Holiness has to do with being totally dedicated to the work of the Lord. We must have it to run the race successfully. Trouble is sometimes hard to bear, but when it is all over it produces the fruit of real goodness in the character of those who accept it in the right spirit -- BY FAITH.

When we walk by faith and practice faith's discipline, we relate everything of this life to future hopes and spiritual values. Living by faith we do not seek our own way, but God's way! It is not how do I feel, but rather, we are to live as God's children, no matter how you may feel. Are you living by faith??

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"I am not mad, most noble Festus
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Many Want To Help God



Jerry Jenkins

One great difference in God and man is the fact that God wants to simplify and man wants to complicate. From Sinai God gave ten commandments. These laws were adequate to explain man's obligations to his Maker and to his fellowman. When the Hebrew people

returned from Babylonian captivity the study of the Law became the greatest of all professions. The men who made this careful study were the scribes.

The Law was broken up into thousands of little rules and regulations. For example, the Law said that no work could be done on the Sabbath, but it became the concern of the scribes to define WORK. They set forth how many paces a man might walk; how much burden he could carry. It took more than fifty volumes to hold the mass of regulations which resulted from their studies.

Recently I read a statement from Earl Wilson which indicates that man has continued in the process of writing laws. Mr. Wilson affirmed: "It is estimated that American legislators have passed 35 million laws designed to enforce the Ten Commandments. Jesus set forth two principles which, if followed, would resolve any relationship problem ever encountered:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second (is) like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets" (Matthew 22).

This is not to assert that these two basic principles have no ramifications. Antinomianism is not taught in the scriptures. Paul stated, "Bear ye

one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Christ does have a law which we are expected to obey. James declared a blessing from God for following the perfect law: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

To love God under the Law of Moses was to put God first, not to bring God down to an object or image, but to revere his name and to keep his

Sabbath. To love one's fellowman included honoring one's parents and obeying moral regulations (Exodus 20). Under the New Covenant one must (1) become a Christian just like the Bible teaches, without alterations; (2) worship as God designs; and (3) live as the Bible directs. The first two principles deal with one's loving God and the third has to do with one's treatment of his fellowman.

--Roebuck Parkway Church of Christ, Birmingham, AL.

When Will He Come?

J. D. Thomas

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only."

In Deuteronomy 29:29 we learn that "the secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children." The implication of this passage is that there is a definite purpose in God's mind for making certain things known in his revelation to man but also that he purposely withholds certain information from us. It is good that the future is mysterious. If we already knew in a sort of "play to play" fashion what our individual futures would hold for us, say in the next ten or twenty years, it would take all the sparkle and zest out of living; and indeed for those whose lives would turn out sadly, it would be a terrible ordeal to know in advance everything that was going to happen and then have to face the realities of such a thing as sorrowful experiences. So it is easy to see that it is wholesome and good that God keeps us in the dark about certain things.

In just the same way it is no doubt wholesome and good for us that we do not know when the Lord shall return. If we knew the day and the hour, it would be a great temptation to those whose interests are more in this world than in the next to play around and to try to be saved through a last-hour repentance, so actually it is conducive to

spiritual growth and development for us not to know when the Lord shall come. Furthermore, it is only fair that we not know since this life is a testing period for real faith. The only way a fair test could be conducted would be for us to be conscious that we might have to meet the Lord at any moment. Thus, we recognize the wisdom in the Lord's statement found in Mark 13:32, "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." As to why Jesus who is himself God should not be apprised of the time during his earthly ministry, this is of no consequence to us for this particular study! and we, therefore, classify this problem as another one of the "unrevealed" things and assume that God has his own good reasons.

In I John 3:2, 3, we note another secret of God -- the nature of our immortal being. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." On this same point in I Corinthians 15:42-44 in speaking of the physical man and concerning the resurrection, Paul says, "It is raised in incorruption," and again, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." Our finite minds are no doubt too limited to

Continued On Page 3



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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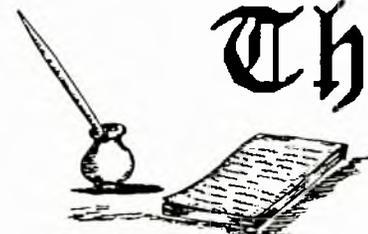
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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The Sin Of Gambling



Flavil Nichols

(Because of the widespread acceptance of gambling, and specifically the BINGO issue in Walker County (Jasper), Alabama, being on the upcoming ballot, I feel justified in reprinting the following article by Flavil Nichols. Brother Nichols wrote this article originally for WOT on February 11, 1966. Because of its length, it has been made into three 'guest editorials.' I commend the truths herein to you and to all who seek to do right in God's sight. JTS)

"Don't gamble; don't bet on cards; don't bet on horse races; don't throw dice." So advised John W. ('Bet-a-Million') Gates, a multi-millionaire, who at one time played bridge for \$1,000 a point, matched pennies for \$1,000 a turn, wagered \$50,000 on a poker hand -- and bet hundreds of thousands of dollars on horse races. He died broke in 1911!

Gambling Is Wide-Spread

In 1954 it was estimated that 57 percent of the American adults -- more than 50 MILLION of them -- gambled regularly on horse races, card games, athletic events, church and club raffles, office pools, slot machines, and betting. More recently, an NBC television program (The Tonight Show, 1-5-66) featured a famous gambler, John Skarney, who reported that "GAMBLING is the biggest business in the nation -- bigger than the TEN LARGEST corporations (including General Motors and U.S. Steel) COMBINED!" GAMBLING in the U.S.A., he said, "handles \$500,000,000,000 a year! (That's \$500 BILLION - spelled with a "B"!)

He estimated the PROFIT at a minimum of 4 percent, which amounts to \$20 BILLION annually! That sum would pay FOUR MILLION MISSIONARIES \$5,000 a year each! But remember: a thing WRONG within itself would still be WRONG regardless of the 'worthy causes' which may benefit from it! The Kentucky legislature currently in session will consider a bill to legalize a state lottery, and another to authorize the first such lottery to finance the Commonwealth's schools. But gambling is sinful and wrong, even for a worthy cause like education.

Some In Lord's Church

With more than half the adult population around us engaged in such activities, it is not surprising that some who have obeyed the gospel of Christ are also guilty. Some may stake money on cards, "match" for cold drinks or for money, bet on golf shots, baseball games, bowling frames, races, stock market, etc. Not realizing the sinfulness

thereof, some failed to give up such practices at the time of their 'conversion.' Others "go along with the crowd" without questioning whether a thing is right or wrong. Such members need teaching for Paul said, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" or "teaching" (II Timothy 4:2; cf. ASV).

What Is Gambling?

The dictionary says GAMBLING means: "To play or game for money or other stake; to hazard; wager." It is "gaming or playing for money or prize which has been 'bet' on the result of the game." It is playing a game of chance or skill FOR STAKES.

Gambling is "getting -- or trying to get -- something for nothing, without rendering service, or exchanging goods." This makes gambling essentially STEALING, and a form of robbery. It is admittedly wrong to get, or try to get, another's money or goods by overpowering him, and taking it by physical strength. This is no different in principle from taking his money or goods from him by skill, talent, training, or trick.

In an effort to obtain something for nothing, gambling involves risking the loss of what one has, whether it be 1 cent or \$1,000,000. -- And gamblers often have LOST what they had, and obtained NOTHING! Paying a fee to play a game of Bingo (for example) in the hope of winning a great deal more, is equivalent to "betting" the amount of your fee against the prize. While no goods are produced, and no service is rendered, a risk which did not exist is created. Gambling is betting on a "chance" at the expense of another or others.

There is a difference between "door prizes," etc., and gambling: the one who receives a prize for having the winning "ticket" is not gambling thereby. The merchant receives his publicity in the advertising scheme, in which no risk is created, and no risk taken. This is also true where one merely "registers," or where tickets are given with each purchase; but "BUYING a chance" is tantamount to 'betting' the price of the ticket -- whether it be little or much -- that the stub drawn will have your number on it! That is gambling.

Some Say: "Life Itself Is A Gamble"

In an effort to justify themselves, gamblers sometime quibble that "Life itself is a gamble." Of course, life involves the 'chance' of infection, disease, accident, and death; but this is not the original sinful meaning of the word "gamble." The sin of "gambling" is "staking money or property on a mere hazard or chance." Gambling is NOT just taking 'chance,' but is BETTING on a 'chance.' For

Rights And Discrimination

Max Patterson

Much is being said about rights, civil and otherwise. Persons from almost every sector of society are crying that discrimination is being carried on against them. Too, it seems that the idea is being accepted more frequently that nobody ought to be discriminated against for anything.

Is discrimination always bad? Look at a specific example: let us say that we do not want a homosexual, or other immoral person, teaching in our school system. The feminists, abortionists, and homosexuals object, arguing that if we do not let the homosexual teach, we are denying that person his constitutional rights. "That is discrimination," it is argued, "and we ought not to discriminate."

Most of those who reason this way are being influenced by liberalism (existentialism, neo-orthodoxy, modernism, etc.), and since they are not concerned by whether or not immorality is right (used as an adjective), they argue on the basis that such immorality is their right (used as a noun). (Perhaps the adjective and noun use of the word "right" can be illustrated by the sentence, "you have the right to overeat, but it is not right for you to do so.")

Christians have always opposed that which is immoral. They have never believed it wrong in some circumstances to discriminate against those who practice immorality.

For example:

1. Who would want to hire a gambler, or a thief, for the company treasurer?
2. Who would want to hire a kidnaper as the playground superintendent?
3. Who would wish to hire a drunkard as a school bus driver?
4. Who would want a prostitute as a teacher in the

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Sound Doctrine



John Gipson

I believe in it. I try to teach it. I remember the words of Paul to Timothy, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3, 4). An elder, as an overseer of the flock, must be a man "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). There is no doubt in my mind that sound doctrine is both desirable and necessary.

Doctrinal error can destroy spiritual life. Jesus warned the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. By adding to and subtracting from the biblical revelation it is possible to end up teaching for doctrine the precepts of men. Therefore, we plead for sound

doctrine.

Having said that, I recognized that it is still possible to be as straight as a gun barrel doctrinally, and just as empty spiritually. The church at Ephesus is a case in point (Revelation 2:1-7).

In other words, sound doctrine does not necessarily guarantee spiritual life or force. Spiritual life comes from having fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (I John 1:1-3). The prerequisite for communion with God is "walking in the light" (I John 1:5-10). One can intellectually hold a correct form of doctrine without ever having fellowship with God. The true test comes when we live in the focused spotlight of applied biblical truth.

Gaius, of the first century, was a man we would all do well to emulate. In writing to the man, John said, "For I greatly rejoiced when some of the brethren arrived and testified to the truth of your life, as indeed you do follow the truth. No greater joy can I have than this, to hear that my children

follow the truth" (III John 1:3, 4).

Believe the truth! Preach the truth! Live the truth! That's sound doctrine.

--P.O. Box 228, Little Rock, AR 72203.

When Will He Come?

Continued From Page 1

comprehend the ways of God and all the full glories that he has prepared for us. There is enough, of course, revealed for us to desire the glories of life with God in the future and to earnestly apply ourselves toward receiving that reward and that, after all, is enough for us to know. It gives us hope in the very fullest sense and gives meaning to our present life here. Even though we do not have "all the answers," we can trust in God implicitly and take courage.

Rights And Discrimination

Continued From Page 2

Christian school?

5. Who would be in favor of hiring a foul-mouthed person as a local evangelist? While we can easily see how discrimination against someone based on involuntary factors such as heredity or physical conditions is immoral, we take an entirely

different attitude toward actions that are sinful. How can we fail to discriminate against that which is not right?

The Christian, especially, would not want to place those who publicize and promote their perversion in positions of influence. These also might become a role model to the students, and spread distortion

of the biblical view of marriage and the family, and morality, as taught clearly in God's Word.

The scriptures teach the following to be wrong (sinful):

1. Those responsible for divorce. Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-9.

2. Fornication and adultery. Romans 13:9; I Corinthians 6:9

3. Homosexuality (including all forms). I Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:26-32

4. Bestiality. Leviticus 18:23.

5. Lust, lasciviousness, licentiousness. Galatians 5:19; Matthew 5:27-30.

6. Abortion. Romans 13:9; Ecclesiastes 11:5; I Corinthians 6:19, 20.

We are not only free to do so, but we ought to feel morally obligated to avoid (and discriminate against) any circumstances that specifically threaten to have sinful consequences.

Suppose the lawmakers of our land enact laws that would allow homosexuality (or other immorality) to become a non-discrimination right in our society. It would deprive Christians (and others) of their right to shun contact with moral perversion. This would have far reaching effects, not only on the morality of this country, but also on our attempt to preach the truth and combat and oppose immorality.

I believe that God has unalterably decreed that homosexual and other immoral relations are to be prohibited. These should be recognized as prohibited in the social order, and enforced by the state. The reason for this is that this is one of the best ways to guard the creation ordinance of heterosexual marriage.

--Hillcrest Church of Christ, Neosho, MO.

The Sin Of Gambling

Continued From Page 2

example: The outcome of a ball game or an election is a 'chance'; a WAGER placed on that 'Chance' is a gamble. Life is uncertain, and in that sense is a 'chance,' but that within itself is NOT a gamble. A "bet" placed on the uncertainty of life is a GAMBLE. Gambling is BETTING on the outcome of a venture which depends entirely (or nearly so) on chance or accident, rather than depending upon investment of time, labor, skill, or money.

Is Farming "Gambling?"

Farmers face the risk of floods, drought, pests, hail, etc. when they invest capital and labor in their crops; do these large, calculated risks make farming gambling? No. (1) God promises "seed time and harvest" shall not cease, although he did not say there would never be drought, flood, famine, etc. (Genesis 8:22). (2) These risks are not "created," but are ever present, whether one farms or not. (3) Farmers do not seek something for nothing, but engage in productive labor. (4) When a farmer prospers, he does not do so at the expense of another; but when a gambler prospers, another goes home empty-handed.

Is Insurance "Gambling?"

No. The risk of loss, injury, illness, or death, is universal; hence these are not "created" risks. Insurance is a most effective means of lessening and distributing their effects. For giving certain guarantees of security and protection, the insurance company uses the insured's money ("Premium payment"), invests it, and under certain conditions returns it with profit. Neither the insurer nor the insured seeks something for nothing, but the insurer sells a service (protection), which does not violate the law of exchange of goods and services.

Ask These Questions

Bro. A. C. Pullias, President of David Lipscomb College, wrote: "The line between the wickedness of gambling and the hazards of investment is unmistakably clear. You can always tell the difference by asking a few simple questions: Is this an investment with reasonable prospects for productive results in goods or services? Will this action create a risk that did not exist, in the hope of obtaining something for nothing, and without the possibility of producing anything good?"

Are You Looking For The City Of God?

Kenneth McClain

The Hebrew writer says: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10). God not only blessed Abraham, but promised that through him and his descendants the world would be blessed. God blessed Abraham because he "believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). Abraham became the father of many nations and also the father of those who are faithful to God today (Galatians 3:7). Are we like Abraham who looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God?

As years pass we are made aware that life is short and the dark clouds of death are above us. Is there anything beyond death? Abraham thought so. That is why he was looking for that city which hath foundations and whose builder and maker is God. Did Abraham find what he was looking for?

If God's word is true then Abraham found that city. In Luke 16, the story of the rich man and the beggar, Lazarus, we are shown that he found the paradise city where the righteous dead go. In Matthew 8:11 we read that "man shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Yes, Abraham did find that city. The question must be, "What did Abraham do in order to find that city?"

Abraham had faith that such a city did exist and he looked for it. There are things in life that we may find by accident, but going to heaven, to the city of God, will be no accident. Many people do not find what they are looking for because they look in the wrong places. Abraham was not looking for a materialistic, earthly city, but a heavenly city, the home of the soul. He, without hesitation, believed all of God's promises. So must we.

Not only did Abraham accept God's assurances, but he worked to obtain the city for which he was looking. If we are people of genuine faith, we will obey what the New Testament teaches us in order to enter that holy city of God. The Hebrew writer says: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;" (Hebrews 5:8, 9). Yes, even Christ was obedient to His heavenly Father.

Abraham lived under the Old Testament and was required to obey commandments which were different from those we must obey today. We do not have to leave our fathers' houses as did Abraham, go into a strange country, nor are we commanded to offer up our sons on the altar as was Abraham commanded to do. When you read the life of Abraham you will find that he held

nothing back when it came to obeying his God. What a great example he is for us today.

The same city that Abraham looked for and found can be ours if we through faith and obedience seek to obtain it. The last chapter of the last book in the Bible says: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and many enter in through the gates

into the city" (Revelation 14:22). Those in Acts 2 asked Peter and the other apostles what they must do to be saved and Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." Like Abraham we must obey all of God's commandments to enter the city of God.

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46203.

A Personal Relationship With The Lord

Alton R. Norman

It has often been said that what we need is a "personal relationship with the Lord." Since neither the word personal nor relationship are found in the Bible, I have often wondered exactly what is meant by those advocating such a relationship. It is true that each person is converted to the Lord under special circumstances. The particular sin of one person may not be the sin of another, and Jesus died for each of our sins. That makes it special, or a "personal relationship."

Prayer time is special. It is an opportunity for each of us to lift up our thoughts unto God. It is a time to thank him for all of his wonderful, exciting, and personal blessings. It is also a time to pour out all of our frustrations, fears, and needs to him who is able to help and comfort us. Because each of our needs differ, personal time in prayer is needful. Public prayers, by their very nature, cannot hope to cover every need of every person present. So Jesus told us to enter into our closet, close the door and pray to our Father who sees in secret. Such private praying might be called a "personal relationship" with the Lord.

God's word, the Bible, is so special! God has chosen to reveal his will for us in the pages of the Bible. The scriptures are inspired (God breathed). Those who wrote the Bible were guided by the

Holy Spirit into all the truth, so that we can know exactly what God desires from us. His will does not change from man to man or nation to nation; it is the same for us all. God's will for all men is that they might be saved. That is why he sent Jesus to earth. And God speaks to each of us through his revealed word, the Bible. When we spend time studying and following that word, we will soon come to think like Christ. Or, as Paul put it, to "have this mind in you which was also in Christ" (Philippians 2:5f). And how could we have a more personal relationship with the Lord than to have his mind within us?

Jesus died for you as an individual. As a Christian, you have the glorious privilege of approaching God in private, personal prayer. And what a joy it is to sit at the feet of the Lord as he speaks to us through his word, the Bible. These three things constitutes our personal relationship with the Lord.

A personal relationship with the Lord is not to be found in subjectivism, in some "feeling better felt than told." It is not found in some "super spiritual atmosphere." A personal relationship with the Lord is found when we become his friends through obedience to his commandments (John 15:14).

--P.O. Box 97, Comelia, GA 30531.

That Wonderful Book

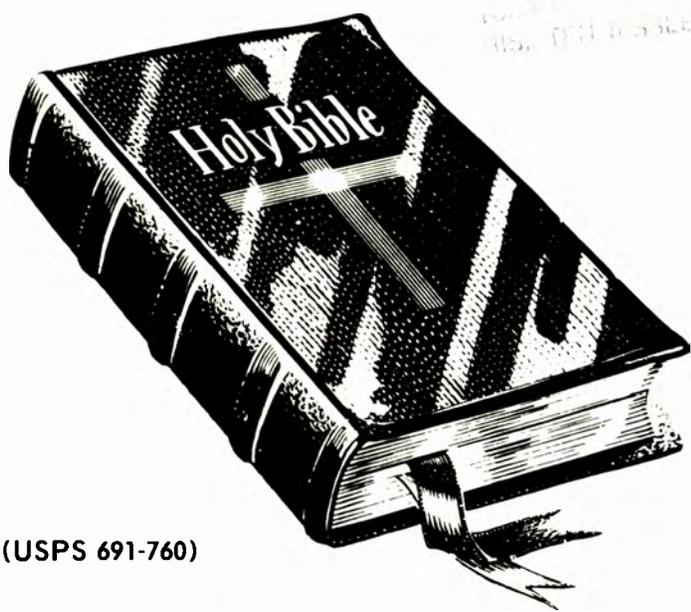
George Pepperdine

The Bible is the most wonderful book in the world. It does not claim to be a book of science, philosophy, geography, but wherever it touches on those subjects, it is unerringly accurate. The Bible leads us into realms in which science and learning of men cannot follow.

What mathematical equation could measure the depth of faith, patience, mercy or brotherly-kindness? What test tube could determine the substance and strength of love, gentleness, virtue, or loyalty? What slide-rule could prove the dimensions of joy, peace, charity or godliness? What scale could accurately weigh the spirit, mind or ideas, music or culture?

The Bible is a book which covers the relationships between God and men; the origin of the human race, the world and all creatures therein; the successes and the failures of men's efforts to live as God challenged them to live. It tells us of the destiny of the world and of mankind, both the righteous and the unrighteous. We shall be judged by it in the "Last Day."

The Bible charts our course through this world on the way from earth to heaven. The route is a meandering trip through many hardships, trials and sorrows until we determine to travel only on the high road of brotherly-love, gentleness, temperance, peace of mind and charity to all.



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cts 26:25

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The Will Of God

Harold Hazelip

(The following is an old but still timely article which needs to be read).

Harold Kushner was recently in our city for a lecture as a sequel to his When Bad Things Happen to Good People. His book became an international best seller and has many helpful suggestions for suffering people.

But its basic stance is an impossible compromise. The problem of evil in the world results from the effort to hold three truths simultaneously: God is good; God is all-powerful; evil is real. The suffering we experience becomes a problem for faith if it causes us to doubt either the goodness or the power of God.

Kushner's conclusion is that God is perfectly good but his power is limited. "Are you capable of forgiving and loving God even when you have found that he is not perfect . . ." he asks? "Can you learn to love and forgive him despite his limitations. . .?" I do not believe this is a possible viewpoint, either biblically or philosophically. I doubt whether anyone is going to worship an imperfect god very long, and I am certain this is not the kind of deity the Bible reveals.

There are better attempts to deal with the problem of suffering. One such attempt was made by Leslie Weatherhead who became widely known through his work as a preacher in London during World War II. He stood by a physician friend whose wife had died and was shocked to hear him say, "It's the will of God. We must accept it."

Weatherhead wondered how his friend could have worked twelve months to ward off that death if he believed it was the will of God. The result was a detailed study of the will of God. Relevant texts are Matthew 7:21; 12:46-50; Mark 14:36; John 4:34; 6:38; 7:17; Ephesians 1:9; 5:15-17; Hebrews 10:7; I John 5:14. Weatherhead concluded that God's will is constant, but must take various forms of the circumstances of history -- including our free will.

First, God has an intentional will. God always

wants joy for each of his creatures (Matthew 18:14). His creation was pronounced "good" six times, "very good" once (Genesis 1). That creation included personhood with possibilities for joy or sorrow.

There was risk in his decision to endow creatures with free will. The creatures became prodigal. The creation began to unravel, to revert toward chaos. This was not what God intended when he created.

This sets the stage for God's circumstantial will. Since the creature has rebelled, what option will result in the most good? The incarnation of Christ was God's answer. Did God intend for him to be rejected and crucified? Or was it not God's will that he "show us the Father" and win our hearts back?

When Jesus was rejected, God faced several alternatives, neither of which was totally desirable. He could order Jesus to answer evil with evil, could give up on human redemption, or allow Jesus to go "the second mile" and die. This was the only alternative with promise toward God's

original objective (Romans 8:23).

It became God's ultimate will that Jesus should "drink the cup." God's integrity, mercy and power could use human sin to accomplish redemption. His ultimate will -- the cross -- reaches the same destination -- joy for the creatures -- as his intentional will, but by a very different route.

This reasoning allowed Weatherhead to reach some meaningful conclusions. First, the will of God is unfailingly positive -- at all times and in all circumstances. Second, not everything happens because of God's will. Much originates outside the heart -- some of it in the prodigals.

Finally, not everything happens in his will -- but in everything that happens God has a will. He seeks ways to respond so that good may come (Romans 8:28). His ultimate will is still possible despite sin if we look for ways to bring the greatest good from each circumstance in our lives.

--David Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN 37204 -- 3951.

What About Abortion?

Samuel Voisard

A mother stepped into a doctor's office carrying a bright and beautiful baby, only a year old. Seating herself near her family physician, she said, "Doctor, I want you to help me out of trouble. My baby is only one year old, and I have conceived again, and I do not want to have children so close together."

"What do you expect me to do?" asked the physician.

"Oh, anything to get rid of it for me," she replied.

After thinking seriously for a moment, the doctor said, "I think I can suggest a better method of helping you out. If you object to having two children so near together, the best way would be to kill the one on your lap and let the other one come on. It is easy to get the one on your lap, and it makes no difference to me which one I kill for you. Besides, it might be dangerous for you if I

undertook to kill the younger one."

As the doctor finished speaking, he reached for a knife and continued by asking the mother to lay the baby out on her lap and turn her head the other way. The woman almost fainted away as she jumped from her chair and uttered one word: "MURDERER!"

A few words of explanation from the doctor soon convinced her that his offer to commit murder was not worse than her request for the destruction of the unborn child. In either case it would be murder. The only difference would be the age of the victim.

(Editor's note: In a world caught up in the pursuit of selfish gratification and sexual satisfaction, it is time that both men and women become concerned with RIGHT VS WRONG more than MY RIGHTS. MURDER is MURDER regardless of the age of the victim. God condemns MURDER and always has!)

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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr. Editor

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Knowing God

Guy N. Woods

One does not know God who does not conform to his will. One may believe intellectually that there is a God; one may affirm the truth of his existence, the facts of his attributes, the reality of his works in nature, but this is not to know God in the true sense of the word. Only those who have wholly committed their wills to his, know him in his saving power. "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3).

If it be asked which commandment constitutes the test, the inspired writer submitted, the answer is, all of them! Any commandment one is disposed to break because of unwillingness to bend one's will to his, provides the occasion which demonstrates lack of full knowledge of him. This is the "one thing" which one "lacks," and which, as in the case of the young ruler's riches, closes the door of heaven in one's face.

The Gnostics boasted of their superior knowledge and spiritual insight, and insisted on their relationship with the Lord, though they did not keep his commandments. With reference to all who hold such views the apostle wrote: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4). The verbs in the Greek text are in the present tense. The meaning is, He who keeps on saying, I know him, yet keeps not his commandments is a liar.

Far from actually and really knowing God, those who refuse to do his will, in addition to being disobedient characters, are liars. The words, "He is a liar," are more emphatic than the words "we lie" of I John 1:6, and "we deceive ourselves," of 1:8. The status of such a person is not only of one

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The Sin Of Gambling Part II



Flavil Nichols

condemnation of gambling by saying, "The word GAMBLE is not even in the Bible." If this proves GAMBLING should not be condemned, the same reasoning would exclude from condemnation "rape," "manslaughter," "suicide," "white slavery," "embezzlement," "bootlegging," "whiskey," "larceny," et al, -- for these words aren't in the Bible, either! Note, however, that the evils identified by these terms ARE clearly condemned in many passages of scripture. I insist that the same thing is also true of GAMBLING! let us see:

Destroys Incentive To Work

Toil and labor are honorable! God assigned to Adam the job of caring for the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). After man sinned, God said to him: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread . . ." (Genesis 3:19). Christians are taught to earn a livelihood by work: "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28). Gambling does not produce goods or services, and violates the principle expressed by Paul: "These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me . . . I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak . . ." (Acts 20:34-34). Gambling bears no good fruit, and "every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matthew 3:10).

"Unjust Gain"

If a gambler wins, his gain is "unjust," concerning which God said: "Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich . . . He that by usury and UNJUST GAIN increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor" (Proverbs 28:6-8).

God rebuked the Jews, and sent them into Babylonian captivity, because they had (among other things) "taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion, and hast forgotten men, saith the Lord God. Behold, therefore, I have smitten mine hand at thy

DISHONEST GAIN which thou hast made" (Ezekiel 22:12-13). "Dishonest gain" describes gambling profits!

A Form Of Covetousness

In the decalogue God said, "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Christ incorporated this command in His New Testament (Romans 13:9), and with other sins Paul admonishes concerning "Covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3). COVET implies eager or inordinate longing for something that belongs to another. God said: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth not for his work" (Jeremiah 22:13). Against such this taunting 'proverb' was directed: "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his (Habakkuk 2:6). Gambling stands indicated by these passages!

Love Of Money A "Root" Sin

Christians need to learn -- and teach others -- not to love MONEY, but to love WORK! For "Covetousness . . . is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). We are to "withdraw" ourselves from such as suppose "that gain is godliness," and should teach that "godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:5-10).

Gambling does not thrive on honest work which either produces goods or renders services; but rather it nurtures the "get-something-for-nothing" philosophy. This encourages laziness and fosters indolence, thus making parasites of men and women who live off the productive labor of others.

The gambler's ideal of life ignores, and conflicts with, the Bible command: "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness, they work and eat their own bread" (II Thessalonians 3:10-12). Christians must labor in honest occupations "for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful" (Titus 3:8-14).

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Unity

Goebel Music

Unity, understood, must be a subject of vital concern to any blood-bought member of God's precious family. That this must be the case is simple when one reads of it in the Master's prayer (John 17:17-21), and also notices the fact that division is condemned (I Corinthians 1:10-13). The Spirit's legislation for us today is ". . . giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . ." (Ephesians 4:1-6). Such inspired statements make unity a "must" in the life of the believer.

However, this unity is not to be maintained at the cost of sacrificing the truth, for only it can make men free (John 8:32; 17:17). The serious and sober student of the Book today needs to realize two things: (1) God does not sanction all unity (Revelation 2:14f), and (2) God does not anathematize all division (Romans 16:17, 18). Therefore, the only conclusion one can draw is that the Almighty is primarily concerned with the Truth, as only it can bring about the kind of unity that God champions. Indeed, God desires unity, but only the kind that is authorized by that which is the standard of our judgment (John 12:48; I Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 20:12, etc.). This is the case simply because there is no other real unity! Anything else is not Bible unity!

Truth is compromised when: (1) Men parade the devilish doctrine of "unity in diversity" and fail to make the true application of such as II John 9-11.

(2) The plenary verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is denied and the Bible is said to

"contain" the Word of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 2:19-21).

(3) People are led to believe that we can be faithful to God and extend fellowship to those who have not obeyed God (Galatians 3:26, 27; Romans 6:1ff; John 3:1-7; I John 1:3).

(4) God's law of exclusion is not practiced by local churches (Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 5:11; Titus 3:10, 11; I Corinthians 5:1ff; II Thessalonians 3:6-15).

(5) The Lord's Supper becomes a matter for the individual and not a family affair (I Corinthians 11:17ff; 14:23).

(6) Women and men confuse their roles, and God's chain of authority is not upheld (I Corinthians 11:1ff; I Timothy 2:8ff).

(7) Teaching leads people to believe you can circumvent the authority of the elders of the local church (Hebrews 13:17; Hebrews 5:9, see the word "obey").

(8) Divorce and remarriage theories teach contrary to plain Bible teaching, e.g., the guilty party can remarry (Matthew 19:3-9; I Corinthians 7:8ff).

(9) Instrumental music in worship is taught on the same par as song books, black boards, baptisteries, etc. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16, etc.).

(10) The church is said to be a denomination (Matthew 16:13ff; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18, 24).

(11) Pattern theology is ridiculed (II Timothy 1:13; cf. Genesis 6:14ff; Exodus 25:40; I Chronicles 28:11, 12).

(12) Explicit and implicit, generic and specific, inclusion and exclusion and matters of faith and liberty are removed from the realm of teaching God's Word (cf. I'm sick of that 'gopher' wood argument").

There can never be real unity until there is a "unity in faith," and the Bible speaks only about THE ONE FAITH! We must believe the same thing to speak the same thing and faith comes by hearing the Word (Romans 10:17) and the Word of Truth (John 17:17). Any time Truth is compromised, unity is an impossibility. Unity is a must, but not when the Truth of God is at stake.

--5114 Montclair, Colleyville, TX 76034.

Knowing God

Continued From Page 2

guilty of a single falsehood, or who is deceived; his acts of falsehood have become embedded in his character as he is, essentially, a liar. Moreover, this person demonstrates the nature and character of his ancestry, the devil, who is his father, and who is a liar from "the beginning" (John 8:44). It was evidently no uncommon thing for some men, at the time John wrote, to adopt the pernicious doctrines of the Gnostics and to affirm that though willfully guilty of sinful acts, they were not thereby corrupted. Some of these people insisted that they were no more polluted by sin than gold is by the mire into which it might fall! Shocking as this theology is, it has its modern counterpart in those false teachers who deny any contamination from sin or risk of the loss of their souls while admitting the fact of known and persisted sin in their lives. there are those today who deny both the sin and the contamination. Some years ago, a prominent denominational preacher in a church which teaches the impossibility of apostasy to one "born again," distributed widely a tract entitled, 'Do a Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?' in which he wrote: "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul." He continued, "The way a Christian lives, his character, his conduct, his attitude toward other people has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul . . . All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safe; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder, will not make his soul in any more danger. . . The way a man lives has nothing to do with the salvation of his soul."

This theology, whether ancient or modern is, in principle, precisely what John so vigorously and clearly condemned, when he affirmed by inspiration that those who say they know him, yet do not keep his commandments, are liars.

--P.O. Box 150, Nashville, TN 37202.

The Sin Of Gambling Part II

Continued From Page 2

Breaks Second Greatest Commandment

Jesus said the second greatest command is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). On this, and the command to love God with all the heart, "hang all the law and the prophets" (v. 40). Paul wrote: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Romans 13:10). But GAMBLING does! Therefore gambling is sinful.

Violates Golden Rule

Gambling tries by trickery and skill to take from another that which rightly belongs to him, without recompense in goods or services. This violates the golden rule (Matthew 7:12), and is sinful.

"Oh, But He Agrees To It"

Thus some would 'justify' their gambling! But it is sinful to wrong another, even with his consent! His 'Consent' would make it right to kill another in a duel, which is "a combat between two persons, fought with deadly weapons by agreement. . . ." (Webster). Dueling is MURDER (or attempted murder) -- with the opponent's 'consent' or 'agreement' thereto! But such agreement does not make it right! Neither does one's 'consent' make it honest or right for another to take, or try to take, from him his money or goods by skill or trickery for nothing in return. His 'agreement' does not

remove the sin from gambling.

Robs His Family

Gambling is often a sin against one's family. Like strong drink, gambling takes from them wages which should support trusting wives and innocent children. Assuming the gambler is willing to GIVE his part of the family income, he has no right to steal his wife and children's portion and forfeit it for nothing in return. From this viewpoint gambling is sinful. "Let him that stole steal no more . . ." (Ephesians 4:28).

Know Tree By Its Fruit

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:18-20). A good tree does not produce POISON fruit -- does not cross species. Similarly, CHRISTIANS can't 'cross species' can't live like sinners, and bear wicked 'fruit' in their lives (I John 3:9). "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). After baptism, one is to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4-5). Gambling is a "bad" or "evil" tree, because its fruit is corrupt and poison. Its influence is bad, and Christians must "come ye out from among them" (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Gambling is sowing to the flesh, not to the spirit (Galatians 6:7, and hinders Christian light and influence in the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

Reliable Evidence Of Pardon



R. W. Gray

The influence of the gospel has caused a desire, on the part of us all, to have a conscience void of offense before God. We are keenly aware that our lives fall short of His glory and seek release from a sense of guilt.

When we speak of pardon it is understood that we refer to "forgiveness," "remission," "justification and salvation."

There are at least three distinct and conflicting views concerning pardon and its evidences. (1) That no one may ever be certain of pardon this side of eternity. (2) That no one has the evidence of pardon by the way he feels inside. (3) That we know, by faith, that God has forgiven us when we submit to the divine plan of salvation revealed in the Bible.

The hereditary total depravity idea as taught by Calvin gave birth to the doctrine that no one, not even the 'elect,' could know for certain that God's grace has been brought to him. Thus, men now sing:

"This a thought I long to know,
And oft it gives me anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His, or am I not?"

Such an attitude cannot satisfy the longing of the sin-sick soul. Paul's absolute confidence in the crown awaiting him is sufficient to show the shallowness of the election theory (II Timothy 4:1-6). "Henceforth," sang Paul, "there IS laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." The doctrine that one cannot know that God has pardoned him, therefore, is false.

EVIDENCE OF FEELING

Inasmuch as all men do not feel a sense of relief upon the same condition or in the same way, it follows that God either has a double standard in His plan of redemption, or the person relying upon feeling as evidence of pardon is mistaken.

The Bible declares that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) -- that there is "one faith" or one system by which we are all saved (Ephesians 4:4-5; Romans 1:16).

The feelings, conscience of man, is a reliable guide within a limited area, but that it has its limitations is unquestionable. The conscience responds to things received through testimony. If the testimony received is truth conscience will prod us to act harmoniously therewith. If the testimony received be false conscience would lead us to act in harmony with false testimony or error. The false testimony concerning Jesus Christ received by Saul of Tarsus led his conscience to reject the Lord -- hence to persecute the Lord's church with a conscience "void of offence" (Acts 24:16).

We are the offender -- God the offended. Pardon takes place in the mind of God, not in the mind of man. We know the mind of the Lord only as He

reveals His will through His Word (I Corinthians 2:10-13). We cannot know we are pardoned, therefore, solely upon the basis of an approving conscience or feelings.

OBEDIENCE - RELIABLE

'Seeing ye have purified your souls IN OBEYING THE TRUTH through the Spirit . . . being born again . . . by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever' (I Peter 1:22). "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The sinner hears the message from God which makes him aware of sin.

The Benefits Of Hell

Roger Jackson

Some say if you look close enough you can find good in everything. One singer tells of how he prayed for the hand of a certain young lady in his youth. Seeing her as an adult, he was thankful he did not get his request. Will Rogers said, "I never met a man I did not like."

If there is some good in everything, there must be good in hell. People abhor some things in this life, and some of these despised things are absent in hell. This should ease their minds a little while they are waiting. It will not help them in hell, though, since there is no peace of mind "where the worm dieth not" (Mark 9:44).

In hell there will be no long, irritating sermons. Gospel preachers make hell-bound people nervous. They think the preacher is picking on them. Every time they come to the assembly he seems to be preaching right at them. Their attitude is, 'Just keep your nose out of my business, and I will call you when I need you (usually for weddings and funerals).' Preachers are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort (II Timothy 4:1-5). They must speak and urge Bible teaching. Many people do not want to be urged. But all that will end in hell. There may be plenty of preachers -- the wrong kind -- but they will not preach. These people will be rid of faithful preachers.

There will be no church workers in hell -- you know, those people who bother you with cards, letters, calls and visits. They have plagued the world ever since the first century when they went everywhere bothering people (Acts 8:4). They go from house to house. "No Trespassing" signs do not stop them (Acts 20:20). You told them you would attend and become a Christian some day (Acts 24:25), and that should have been enough.

He listens to the plan of God in His Son. He "obeys from the heart the form of doctrine delivered, being then made free from sin, becomes the servant of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

When we as believers "repent" and are "baptized" we have God's own promise that sins are remitted in Christ's blood (Acts 2:36-39). A "Spirit filled" man of God speaks to the heart of the sinner -- he is persuaded and obeys (Acts 2:40-41). This, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

--563 McGukin Road, Bremen, GA 30110.

But, NO! Well, you will not have to get out of your seat to open the door for them any more in hell. They will be gone for good! Ah, the benefits of hell!

In hell there will be no one to tell you how to live your life. No one will tell you about sin. How you hate that word! You wanted to be with the in-crowd. In hell, the in-crowd will be everywhere, and you will be in the middle of them. You will be with your kind of people. There will be no more calls to holiness by those goody-two-shoe-do-gooders who thought they were better than you. You were just as good as those hypocrites. You might notice when you get to hell that all the hypocrites will be there, too.

There will be no more invitations to obey the gospel and get your life right with God. Remember how you hated those invitations? Talk about pressure! It was hard, but you resisted every one of them. There were family appeals, especially from your mate. They never gave up on you, but you won, you showed them, didn't you! They even prayed about you at the church building, but you did not yield. Some invitation songs were hard to refuse, but you gripped the pew and did not budge an inch. There will be no more invitations to salvation down in hell. Won't that be a relief!!!

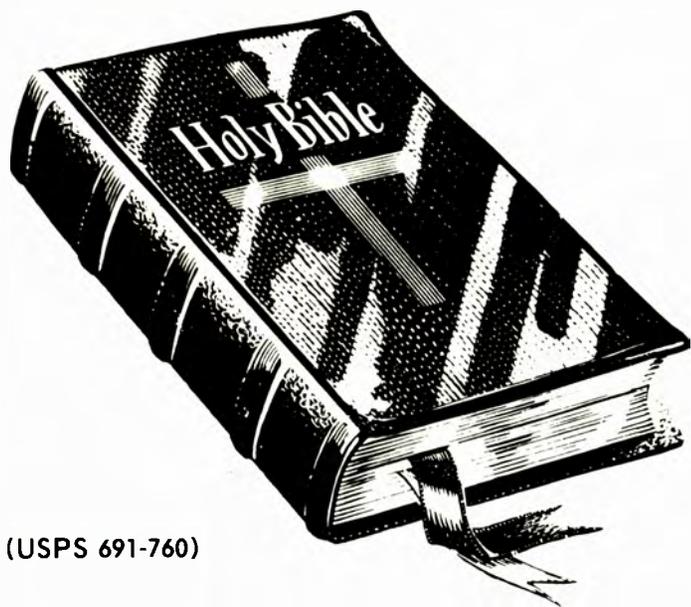
There is a catch in all this good news. You need to make sure that you want these benefits. When you cross over into eternity, there will be no opportunity to change your mind (Luke 16:26). If you have the slightest doubt that you want these benefits, you need to make some changes right now.

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Do On Sunday Night
That Is
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"I am not mad, most noble Festus. My words are words of truth and soberness."

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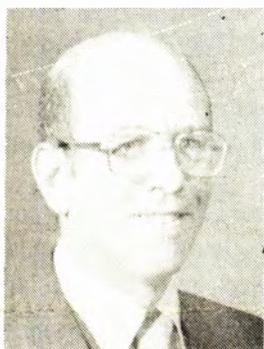
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Prejudicial Labeling



Joe E. Galloway

The recent Supreme Court decision regarding Pennsylvania abortion restrictions, along with the news media's attempt to further presidential candidates who favor abortion, has brought a proliferation of writing and comments on that subject. To help sway a nation of people that has been fed

the merits of **positivism**, some insidious appellations are being attached to those on both sides of the question. These are intended to make those favoring abortion look good, while casting reflection on those who oppose it.

In spite of the fact that those trying to protect the lives of unborn babies are "pro-life," the news media shuns this while using the expression "anti-choice" when referring to them. The tag "anti" will create more opposition to those who respect the sanctity of human life. "Pro-abortion" accurately describes the stance of those favoring abortion, but the expression "pro-choice" is used instead. It sounds more pleasing, doesn't it?

Forgotten is the fact that they are rejecting the choice of God that innocent life not be taken. Forgotten also is the choice the aborted baby is never allowed to experience!

Last week I saw a bumper sticker with the large letters, "I AM PRO-FAMILY." This appeared to be a good sentiment until I read the smaller print under it, "Pro-Family Means Pro-choice." All these positive "pro's" may sound good, but they actually add up to ANTI-FAMILY and ANTI-GOD since they advocate the killing of unborn babies. God hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17). One reason God rejected his Old Testament people, delivering them into the hands of the heathen Assyrians and Babylonians, was their shedding the innocent blood of their sons and daughters (Psalm 107:38-41).

The use of negative labels to make defenders of

God's truth look bad, and of positive terms to give favor to false teachers, is a present concern among us. A little reflection on our history a hundred years ago will show that those who favored a loosening from Bible authority to accept instrumental music and the missionary society referred to themselves as "progressives." The designation "anti" was often used by them (as they still use it today) to refer to those of us who refused to accept these additions, and who insisted on doing only that for which we have Bible authority.

Presently those who are again attempting to pull us into a more ecumenical stance, which would cause us to open our arms of fellowship to accept many who teach and practice error, are using a number of prejudicial labels.

One such label is "Pharisee." Anyone who knows anything at all about the New Testament knows that Jesus condemned the Pharisees for a number of things: (1) They were hypocrites, not practicing what they preached (Matthew 23:3-4, 13-14). (2) What good they did was for human applause (Matthew 23:5). (3) They bound their human traditions as divine law (Matthew 15:3-9). (4) They were lovers of money (Luke 16:14). (5) They were self-righteous (Luke 18:9-14). But, the Pharisees were never condemned for carefully keeping God's law! Yet, this is the application made with this term today. Those who stand firm for what the Bible authorizes are being termed Pharisaical.

"Unloving" and "judgmental" are terms used concerning those of us today who point out error that is being taught and practiced. Giving a false teacher's name is especially a "No-No"! Never mind that we do this out of love for the Lord, and for the souls who will be eternally lost because of such error. Never mind that Jesus and the inspired apostles both condemned error and named the false teachers (Matthew 23; I Timothy 1:18-20; II Timothy 2:16-18).

"Legalist" is another term thrown at those who

stand firm for Bible truth. It is used to falsely suggest that we believe justification to be merited because of our strictness in law keeping, apart from God's grace. Some even go so far as to suggest that grace is only now being discovered in churches of Christ! Those of us who have been around for awhile know that both we, and countless other gospel preachers, have taught through the years that we do not and cannot earn salvation. It is by God's grace. But, God only saves by his grace when we, by faith, obey his word!

"Negative preaching" is a charge made against many faithful preachers today. (This article is a negative article to such brethren). The preacher may be very positive in showing what the Lord requires as he attempts to turn people from compromise, error, and sinful practice. Nevertheless, the label of "negative preaching" is given to kill his effectiveness. Many a faithful preacher has lost his job when elders have been pressured to stop such "negative" preaching!

Labels are not wrong within themselves if they properly fit, and if we are not using them to turn attention from our own sins. Count the number of times Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites" in Matthew 23. John labeled Diotrephes as "one who loves to have the preeminence" in 3 John 9. We need, though, to be people who think for ourselves as we hear and read such appellations being attached to brethren. The important thing is not what someone implies by a label. Rather, we must determine whether or not the one named is faithfully preaching and practicing the truth.

Finally, we need to understand that just because "everyone" speaks well of a man does not mean that he is teaching the truth. Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26).

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

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Burning Hearts

Dan Harless

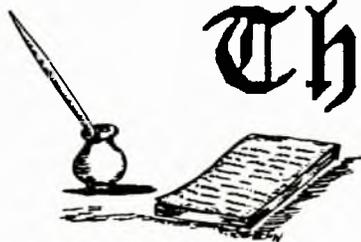
Two weary, discouraged people were on their way "to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. They communed with each other of all things which had happened. And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together that Jesus drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another?" (Luke 24).

"Communication" is a word much in evidence these days. The development of communication has reached a point never dreamed possible only a few short years ago. Yet men still fail, as did these on the road to Emmaus, to recognize Jesus as their very own Savior.

Jesus' question caused one of them whose name was Cleopas to ask, "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?" It seemed incredible that anyone could fail to know of the events that had taken place. But Jesus merely asked, "What things?" And they said unto him, "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel."

It was he, and the plan of redemption was in progress. "Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things," he asked, "and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The Sin Of Gambling Part III



Flavil Nichols

(The great article by brother Flavil Nichols concerning the sin of GAMBLING is continued in this 'guest editorial.' It is worthy of your careful consideration and study. JTS).

Does Not Glorify God

When one is "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3-4) he becomes a "babe in Christ" (I Corinthians 3:1). As "a new creature" in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), he must "Keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). It is "worldly" to gamble, and Christians must not be guilty. Gambling is "after the flesh," and we read: "If ye walk after the flesh ye shall die" (Romans 8:13). The Holy Spirit directs Christians; "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). No one can glorify God by gambling.

Christ Our Example

Christ left "us" an example, that ye should follow in his steps (I Peter 2:21). The apostle Paul wrote: "Be ye followers (ASV: 'imitators') of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). He said the Thessalonians "became followers of us, and of the Lord" (I Thessalonians 1:6). And he required the Philippians to do "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me," (Philippians 4:9). Would Christ, or his apostles, gamble if they were among us today? Can you -- by the longest stretch of your imagination -- conceive of Christ's wagering on a horse race? or a shooting match? or betting on a rooster fight? or on a 'crap' game? No! -- a thousand times, No!!! Nor would you have any respect for a preacher who is guilty. Just suppose some elders and their preacher play golf together, and 'bet' on their game! That would be the same, in principle, as their shooting craps, or bucking dice off a wall, high man for a \$1.00! And "matching for a cold drink" is not any less sinful. Christ, his apostles, dedicated preachers and godly elders should lead a better example than this.

Abstain From Gambling

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). The Am. St. Version says, "Abstain from every form of evil." Surely this prohibits Christians from participation in any kind of gambling.

Need 'Spot Remover'

At his second coming Christ will present the church unto himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it

should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). Gambling and other such "blemishes" ought to be "removed" by repentance; the "spots" ought to be "washed" out by the blood of Christ (Revelation 7:14; I John 1:7-9); and the "wrinkles" ought to be "ironed" out of our lives by humble and strict compliance with the will of Christ.

Children Need Better Training

God placed upon parents the responsibility to Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). Fathers are required to "provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Of course parents may employ "tutors and governors" (Galatians 4:2) to aid in training their children. But with the movies -- and TELEVISION -- popularizing gambling, parents need to redouble efforts to train aright their precious children.

"In a survey of 100 films, 22 displayed some form of gambling. In 12, the hero participated, and the heroine in 4. 5 showed gambling in large gambling houses with different kinds of devices; 5 showed gambling with cards, 3 at horse races, 3 at dice, 1 while playing pool, and 1 by matching coins. 9 pictures showed the hero or heroine winning big stakes at gambling -- Such pictures are purposely and shrewdly designed to undermine convictions that gambling is wrong." (Herbert J. Miles, in MOVIES AND MORALS) Television extends the influence of gambling scenes into most of our homes! We must wage extensive teaching campaigns to counteract its powerful effect.

Just as dram-drinking precedes drunkenness and alcoholism, so gambling for SMALL stakes precedes LARGE wagers and professional gambling. Those guilty are little gamblers first, but the sin grows on them (James 1:13-15, ASV). They may "MATCH" for cold drinks, or BUY "CHANCES" on a punchboard first; but later on they gamble for bigger and bigger prizes or stakes. A mother who wins a vase at bridge should not be surprised if her son wins (or loses!) \$1,000 at cards! SHE taught him to be a gambler.

Gambling Is Sinful

There are three legitimate means of transferring money (or its equivalent): (1) THE LAW OF LABOR -- physical or mental -- is where by time and energy expended in the production of goods or rendering of service, one actually earns the money he receives. (2) THE LAW OF EXCHANGE, in which a commodity is exchanged for its value in money. (3) THE LAW OF LOVE, in which something is GIVEN, without any desire or expectation of receiving anything in return.

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Burning Hearts

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spent." There was danger on the road, even as danger threatens on streets and highways throughout our nation.

"It came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight, And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Their weariness vanished immediately. That same hour they returned to Jerusalem where they found the eleven discussing the fact that "the Lord is risen." The two from Emmaus then "rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread." The drama continued to unfold for it was at this point, even as "they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you." Then he continued, "All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." Later, when the gospel began to be preached, the apostle Peter showed clearly how fulfillment had come. First, the law of Moses: "Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 2:22, 23). Peter also mentioned the fulfillment of the words of the prophets, in this case the prophet Joel: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, That great and notable day: And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:20, 21). Third, the fulfillment of the Psalms; "Thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades . . . The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Acts 2:27, 35).

The novelist who called herself George Eliot said the Emmaus story was the loveliest in all the world. She might have added it was also one of the most dramatic.

In this year of our Lord, far removed in time and

place from the triumph and tragedy of the cross, what effect does the reading of his seven last words have upon our hearts? In response to pitiless taunts, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:43). To a thief beside him who asked to be remembered "when thou comest into thy kingdom," Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Fully aware of the suffering of his earthly mother he said, "Woman, behold, thy son!" (John 19:26, 27). As the day wore on he was heard to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Mark 15:34)? Now as we read again these tortured words from the lips of our Lord, what is the condition of our hearts? Icy cold or burning within us? Still later, his body cruelly dehydrated, Jesus cried, "I thirst." Shortly afterward came the cry, "It is finished" (John 19:28, 30). Thus he blotted out the "bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us . . . nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

Many speak disparagingly of the church, not taking into account that it was purchased with the precious blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28). Consider his words in response to a noble confession: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The church in many areas has fallen into disrepute. Yet it stands, and will stand, till the end of time. Does this thought cause our hearts to burn within us?

Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but

he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Our Lord once placed the words "believe" and "obey" in juxtaposition. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). He also uttered these chilling words, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in you sins" (John 8:24). Be it remembered, Jesus came that we might have life abundantly (John 10:10), here and hereafter.

In his great commission Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

In the last chapter of the last book of the Bible are the imperishable words that need to be burned into our souls: "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).

Long ago the risen Lord spoke and those who heard said, "Our hearts burned within us." He speaks to us today through the written word. His gospel alone is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). May hearts continue to burn as he pleads, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

--5200 Granny White Pike, Nashville, TN 37220.

Jesus Delivers Us From Sin

Hoyt White

Jesus Christ came to this earth to deliver men from sin and its consequences. All of us born of flesh are under bondage to corruption. Humanity soon learns we are on a planet without requesting to be here. Our abilities of discernment enable us to become conscious of our sin. Our movements involving the flesh inevitably place us in the category of sinners. The accountable soul is able to see the necessity of deliverance from sin. Sin holds man in bondage. Sin justifies punishment. This

hold upon man's soul can only be broken by the Redeemer of men's souls, Jesus Christ. The Son of God conquered sin and death and His Victory can be ours when we choose to serve the Lord of righteousness.

"All unrighteousness is sin" (I John 5:17). This knowledge helps us to see our pathetic plight without a Deliverer. The consequences of Sin stand out to the accountable soul in such a way as to make us seek help from above. To know that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4) is enough to turn our heads toward the King of glory. Without a Deliverer we can say with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24).

The act of deliverance is considerably like deliverance from other things. God delivered Lot from Sodom, a city destined for destruction; Joseph from affliction in Egypt; Israel out of Egyptian oppression and the three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace. God certainly knows how to deliver the godly today! God knew how to deliver Lot from certain destruction. He know how to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the death belches of a heated furnace. Our God knew how to deliver Joseph and

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The Sin Of Gambling Part III

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GAMBLING comes under NONE of these laws, but is a dishonest means of transferring money or its equivalent.

Summary

Betting on the "CHANCE" or probable outcome of an event is gambling. Gambling destroys incentives to honest toil and work. Its profits are "UNJUST GAIN." It is contrary to the spirit and letter of Christianity, encourages laziness, and is a manifestation of covetousness, which is idolatry. It fosters the "get-something-for-nothing" attitude. It

ignores the second greatest commandment, and violates the GOLDEN RULE. It wrongs another -- with his consent; but it is sinful nonetheless. Gambling robs one's family, and bears evil fruit. It does not glorify God, and rejects the example set by Christ and the apostles. At least, gambling has the "appearance of evil," from which Christians must abstain. It is a blemish in Christian character. "Little" gamblers become "big" gamblers.

GAMBLING IS A SIN! -- There can be no other conclusion.

The Shifting Sands Of Fortune

William P. Smotherman

"Now there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:8). These words report the end of an era. They refer to a watershed event, a crisis happening that would affect the temporal destinies of hundreds of thousands of people. The background of this text is well known to most of us. Joseph had saved Egypt from famine by predicting that seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of nothing.

He had been sold into Egypt as a slave by his brothers, but had risen in that kingdom to the rank of Prime Minister. His ability to interpret dreams, his strength in resisting temptation, his generosity in forgiving his brothers had made him a legend in his time. The Hebrews fared well in Egypt thanks to Joseph's popularity and power. They were accorded religious freedom, economic opportunity and fair treatment under the law. But now all of this is to be changed. Joseph was dead! A new dynasty was coming into power! There would be a "new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph."

A decidedly different day opened for the Hebrew nation with the ascension of a new Pharaoh to the throne. While there is no single event to which I can point as the cause of it all, I suggest that a similar situation exists for Christians in the western world today. There are new ideas, new perceptions of reality, new attitudes about right and wrong and the meaning of existence in the world today that will make life hard for us. The old accommodations, the former rapprochement that we once enjoyed are rapidly dissolving. Old favors we had come to take for granted are being snatched away.

Let me illustrate what I mean. As churchmen in the United States we must live with the fact that an increasingly secular culture is becoming increasingly hostile to us. There was a time in American life when the church was virtually a de facto Established church. We thought nothing of offering prayer in a public school, because in a de facto way we had parochialized the public school system. We thought nothing of the right to read the Bible in a public school. We had our baccalaureate services at commencement time. We had our

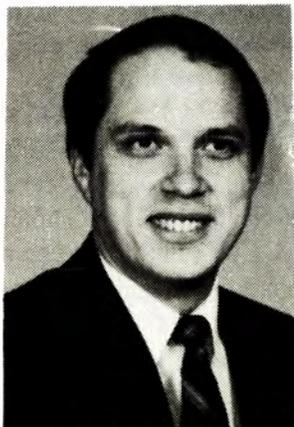
Sunday blue laws on the books to help protect our day of worship. No one questioned our tax-exemption. It was readily conceded that we were performing some kind of merciful, helpful service to society as a whole. There was strong social support for church activities.

But now the climate has definitely shifted. A perceptible hostility has been unleashed against the church. In a pluralistic society more and more people feel that no one point of view has the right to prevail unchallenged and receive tax benefits. Besides the country does not really want a church that meswses around with social issues and questions some of the assumptions of the Establishment. This is the present mood. There is a new king in Egypt and he knows not Joseph. The

former accommodations are fast disappearing. But the Hebrews found that even through the new Pharaoh, God was working out his purpose. The Exodus was followed, in due time, by entrance into the Promised Land. Secularism will prove hard for us, but perhaps out of this challenge we will become a leaner, more efficient church, more serviceable to Christ and the world, a church that will, instead of reflecting its culture, be a redeeming and cleansing force within that culture.

(Brother William P. Smotherman was serving as minister of the Church Street church in Lewisburg, TN., when this article was written some twenty-three years ago. Today we see more and more evidence of the secular society of which he spoke. JTS)

Overcoming Discouragement



Ted Burleson

Elijah was so discouraged. God had used Elijah's mouth to warn the people and to suppress idol worship. Queen Jezebel placed a death warrant for Elijah's life. He fled in dismay at his own weakness. Elijah felt so alone.

Have you ever felt like Elijah as his soul was in anguish under

the juniper tree? I have. It is no disgrace to be discouraged. Life will sometimes disappoint us. There are ways to overcome discouragement. Let's note a few.

REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE NOT ALONE. God told Elijah that there were 7,000 other people who had not worshiped Baal (I Kings 19:18). The Lord told Paul on a ship tossed with tempestuous waves that he was not alone (Acts 27:23). Discouragement rarely wants companionship. Force discouragement to allow you to talk with God and your friends. We are being built together

into the temple of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). Without one another, our temple may weaken.

KNOW THAT THERE IS A WAY WITH GOD. When it looks like all creation is breaking loose and chaos runs rampant with its feverish fury, know that God is still in control. The Psalmist said it well, "I know the lord will maintain" (Psalms 140:12). Solomon said that the righteous will come through trouble (Proverbs 12:13).

SPEAK A GOOD WORD TO OTHERS. Depression makes pleasant speech almost unaudible. Force your mouth to say good things to those around you and your mind will remember that you have a good heart to bring forth good speech. The wise man said that anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad (Proverbs 12:25). This will require great diligence for it will seem forced and uncomfortable at first. Use diligence for it is a precious possession (Proverbs 12:27).

LET GOD'S WORD REMAIN IN YOUR HEARTS. We will suffer no persecution that God isn't familiar with. Persecution will come but the awe of God's word will remain in our hearts (Psalms 119:161).

DON'T GIVE UP HOPE. Deferred hope makes our heart sick (Proverbs 13:12). Jesus hasn't given up on us so why should we give up? If anyone would give up it should be Jesus, but He hasn't given up. When He fed the thousands with five loaves and two fishes, the people asked Him to show them a miracle. They had just feasted on a miracle but wanted more. It might make some give up on the people, but not Jesus. He will not give up on you.

Get out from underneath your juniper and give God your old discouraged heart. We're being transformed by the renewing of our minds. Let God renew yours!

--405 West Seventh St., Columbia, TN 38401.

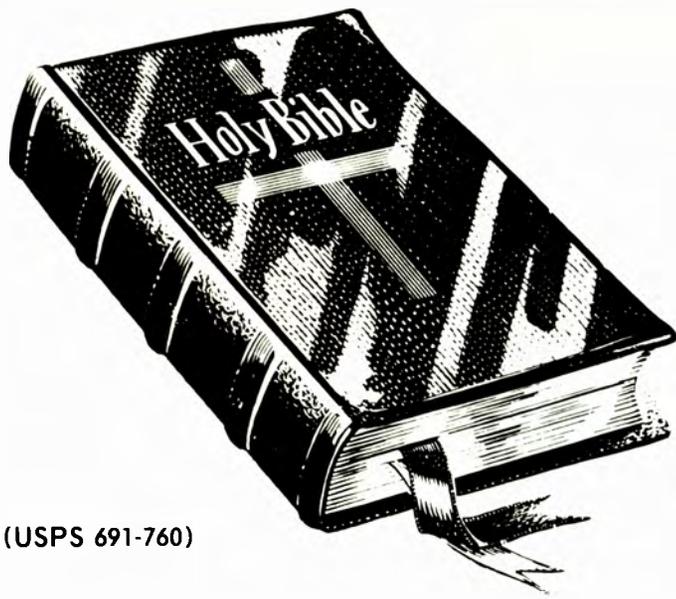
Jesus Delivers Us From Sin

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all of Israel from slavery. It is significant to note that the delivered were honest, moral, pure and faithful to God. When we trust God for deliverance, He will deliver us out of the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of heaven. God has never promised to deliver those of whom Lot's wife is a type. She turned her eyes from the source of deliverance. Tragedy strikes when we "look back" or "look away" from our Deliverer.

Through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, we may be delivered from the wrath which awaits the ugliness of sin. The disciples of Jesus were instructed to pray for deliverance from evil. Prayer is a petition which is necessary for righteous

communication with the Mediator between God and men. Then with a submissive mind the sinner yields to the voice of the Lamb. The penitent believer who has confessed Jesus as the Son of God is made free from sin by being baptized into the death of Christ. "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 6:17, 18). Sin resides in our own being. But if we walk in the light of the word of the Lord, his blood cleanses us from sin. There is deliverance for the obedient in Jesus Christ.



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Words of Truth

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

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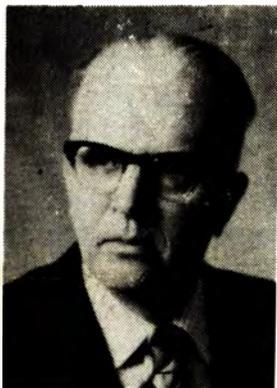
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SPECIAL ISSUE: "VOICES FROM THE PAST"

Who Crucified The Christ?



Frank D. Young

In the Ecumenical Council, recently recessed in Rome, "WHO CRUCIFIED CHRIST" was kicked around as if it were some denominational dogma or political football. During the Council, the declaration was made that "all mankind" and not "Jews alone" are responsible for the

crucifixion. This statement was hailed by the Jews as being a step toward better relations between the Catholics and Jews. Recently however, it was challenged and the Jews became concerned.

In the first place, what difference does it make as to what the Council said about it? That will not make it that way! But really, who did crucify Christ? Peter on Pentecost said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Again he said, "Ye by wicked hands have crucified and slain . . ." (Acts 2:23). In Acts 3 Peter said to the "men of Israel" (Verse 12), "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just . . . and killed the Prince of life . . ." (Verses 14, 15). Again in Acts 4 Peter said to the "rulers of the people of Israel" (Verses 8, 10) that "ye crucified" the one "whom God raised from the dead." The Bible abundantly declares the Jews crucified the Christ.

The first three trials of Christ were before the Jews. The accusations that led to his arrest and trials were made by Jews. They even went so far as to say "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:35). Yes, the Jews crucified Christ.

But why the argument as to WHO crucified him? NO LIVING JEW CRUCIFIED HIM. But what about the Jews who now live? Jewish people today are as all others who refuse to obedience to Christ. They have trodden under foot the Son of God and . . . counted the blood of the covenant . . . an

unholy things, and . . . done despite unto the spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:30). The Jew was Paul's consideration in Romans 10:2 when he said "they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge."

People have no right to be prejudiced against a Jew because of what the Jewish people did. After all, Christ himself was a Jew. The apostles were Jews. For several years the church was, in the main, Jewish. Because an apostate body (the Catholic Church) makes a human law is no reason for Jews to be too concerned. But rather they should examine their lack of faith in Christ.

The Jews had Jesus crucified. Their own method of execution was by stoning as in the death of Stephen (Acts 7:55-60). The Romans, which were Gentiles, actually executed Jesus. But all this fulfilled Jesus' own prediction when he said beforehand, "the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him unto death, and SHALL DELIVER HIM TO THE GENTILES TO MOCK, AND TO SCOURGE, AND TO CRUCIFY HIM . . ." (Matthew 20:18, 19).

In one sense of the word, all of us crucified Jesus.

If it had not been for man's sins Jesus would not have come to earth and would not have died (Hebrews 10:5). He came to seek and save us (Luke 19:10). He died for our sins . . . tasted death for every man . . . shed his blood for remission of our sins (I Corinthians 15:3, 4; Hebrews 2:9; Matthew 26:28).

In one sense, some still crucify the Lord. Those who give up Christ and go back to the law and begin to look for a Christ yet to come, are crucifying him over. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; SEEING THEY CRUCIFY TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH, AND PUT HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

He is our only hope! "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY HIM" (Hebrews 5:9). He asked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46)? Those who will not obey him are in fact lined up with his enemies (Matthew 12:30).

(Frank D. Young gave his life to preaching and teaching the gospel for many years. He was buried in Jasper, Alabama in 1989).

The Door Of Instruction



S. F. Hester

The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthian brethren said, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is open unto me, and there are many adversaries" (I Corinthians 16:8, 9). In this passage Paul uses a door in a figurative sense to indicate that an

opportunity was afforded him for preaching the gospel of Christ. A door is that through which entrance is gained. When John saw a door opened

in heaven, he said, "After this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven . . ." (Revelation 4:1). This door is the one through which we all wish to enter when we come to the end of our journey here upon this earth. We should be forever thankful that God is his great love for us has made it possible to do that very thing. Peter said in II Peter 1:5-11 that the Christian must add certain things to his faith in order that he may enter the everlasting kingdom. We learn from this passage that such an entrance is conditional upon our part. In other words, before this abundant entrance 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*

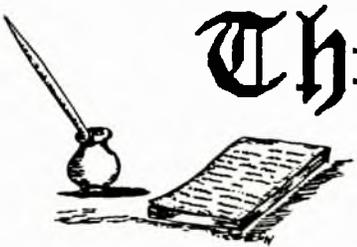
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Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

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The Editor's Pen



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Special Edition

". . . and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

Paul said in Romans 15:4 that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

John noted (20:30, 31) "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." Later he would note "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I

suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

Hebrews 11:4 informs us that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

Within the pages of this issue we find words of wisdom from great men of God who "being dead yet speak" to us today. The words they penned years ago still ring loud and clear, and they are needed today. Read them carefully.

What About Legalism?

Franklin Camp

One of the claims of some brethren for some special operation of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Christian is that this offsets legalism. Just how the Holy Spirit does this has not been explained. The Bible teaches that certain things must accompany our obedience for it to be acceptable. But the Bible is clear as to what produces acceptable obedience. Let us notice what the Bible says.

The book of Galatians deals with this question. The Judaizing teachers were trying to bring the Galatians into subjection to the law of Moses. They wanted to bind the law on Gentile Christians. Mixing the law of Moses with the Gospel produced legalism. This is the problem of legalism that the New Testament deals with. I know of no New Testament passage that deals with the problem of legalism that did not involve the principle of mixing the law with the Gospel and of trying to bind the law on Gentiles. This should indicate that the problem of legalism was not rooted in some special operation of the Spirit in the Christians, but a failure to understand the Gospel.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6).

The phrase "in Christ" is found over and over in the gospel. This phrase denotes relationship; a spiritual relationship that is formed when one enters the church. The great proposition of the gospel is to make men sons of God. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male

Is Jesus Coming Soon?



Gus Nichols

will be "SOON."

We have no controversy with any one over THE FACT of the second coming of Christ. "Churches of Christ" even take the Lord's supper every Lord's day looking back to the suffering of Christ AND FORWARD TO HIS SECOND COMING (1 Corinthians 11: Hebrews 9:28; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

The point which we wish to make is the time of the coming of our Lord has not been revealed. We do not know when Jesus is coming. Whether soon or late. Jesus says "Ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33). The time of the second coming is one of the secret things which belongs "unto the Lord our God," and not to us (Deuteronomy 29:29). "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). Therefore, NO MAN KNOWS THAT CHRIST IS COMING SOON: neither does any one know that his coming will be in the far distant future.

Many have set times for the Lord's return, but all such time-setters have been proven to be false prophets. William Miller set the time to be 1843. He changed his figures and moved the time up another year. But Jesus did not come. Mrs. White used such expressions as "Time has continued a few years longer than they expected; therefore,

they think it may continue a few years more," and "time can last but a very little longer; and time is almost finished." She said, "Christ is soon coming," and spoke of "a few short months." She said that some of those at that conference, "will be alive and remain upon earth to be translated at the coming of Christ." That was 1856, over 100 years ago. All those at that conference are now dead, and Christ has not come. It is right to live in view of the coming of Jesus, but it is not scriptural to set the time as either near, or far away in the future.

There have been predictions of the second coming connected with all wars since his ascension. They are based on a perversion of the passage: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:6). The time-setters think we ought to be troubled when "wars and rumors of wars" are upon us. But Jesus said, "See that ye be NOT TROUBLED" for his coming, "IS NOT YET." Wars are no sign of his coming.

Yes, the time is set! "HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY IN WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD" (Acts 17:31). This "appointed" day has not yet come. When God gave the New Testament, he knew Christ would not come before 1968 (ED. NOTE: date of this article) for he had the day "Appointed," and it has not arrived to date. He did not teach in the first century that he would come in their day. In light of the fact that Christ has not come yet, we know that God has never taught anyone that Christ was coming prior to 1968. God never teaches falsely and did not teach through the New Testament in the first century that Christ was coming in that century.

If God had taught that Christ was coming in "a

What About Legalism?

Continued From Page 2

nor female; for ye are one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:25-29).

There is no doubt but that men are made sons of God through the gospel. This is in fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham. This promise was for the Gentile as well as Jew. Did the gospel really make men sons of God? What was needed more to enable them to serve as sons? Nothing! Their problem was not in not having some special operation of the Spirit, but in failing to realize their position as sons of God. False teaching was what was effecting them. The Gospel had made them sons of God! They needed to realize this and that realization would produce service as sons and not slaves of Judaism. Any legalism in the church is not the fault of the gospel, but rooted in a failure to understand the gospel. The idea that legalism in the church is produced by our not teaching the truth about the Holy Spirit is a denominational theory that some have brought into the church.

The work "worketh" equals obedience which involves commands. Thus, the obedience of the gospel is an obedience of faith. The Roman letter begins and ends with the emphasis on the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith involves both trust and obedience and any obedience that lacks faith would not be acceptable to God (Hebrews 11:6). How can

obedience that is produced by faith be legalism? It cannot be legalism if one obeys a command by faith! If it is obeyed in faith it includes trust and if our obedience has in it the principle of trust, it cannot be legalistic. Here is a part of Paul's answer to the problem of legalism.

Not only must our obedience to the commands of the gospel be in faith, it must also be in love. The gospel rests upon these two vital principles. I have shown that obedience cannot be legalistic and be by faith; now add to faith love which also must characterize our obedience and then tell men how this obedience can be legalistic. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten by him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandment; and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:1-3).

**"Fall Quarter Of
Southern Christian University"
Registration And First Class
Will Be Sept. 17 At 5:30
In Fellowship Room,
Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ Jasper
Subjects:
First Class: Romans
Second Class: Studies In The
New Testament; The Holy Spirit
Instructor: W. Gaddys Roy**

The Door Of Instruction

Continued From Page 1

permitted, there are other doors through which we must pass. I want to call attention to one of those doors.

THE DOOR OF INSTRUCTION. We learn from a study of the Old Testament that the Jews were born into Covenant relationship with God and later were instructed. But, it was predicted that the New Covenant would be different. One of the chief differences is that those under the New Covenant do not need to be taught to know God, for they already know him (Deuteronomy 6:16-25). The prophet Jeremiah declared that the day would come when all men would know God and the covenant would be written in their hearts. He also said that the sins of man would be forgiven (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Turning to the New Testament we find reference made to this prophecy in Hebrews 8:8, stating that it had been fulfilled when Christ died on that cross and became the mediator of the New Covenant. Jesus taught (John 6:44, 45) that no man can come to him without instruction. He also tells us in John 17:17 that sanctification is through the truth.

Several New Testament passages emphasize the importance of preaching God's word. Mark 16:15, 16 and II Timothy 4:1-5 drive home the fact that we must be about the business of spreading the gospel. There are also passages which ascribe

power to God's word. Paul declared that the gospel is "the" power of God (Romans 1:16). In addition, I Peter 1:25 and I Corinthians 1:21 teach that God chose preaching as the means by which the truth is to be made known. Paul points out in Romans 10:13-17 that faith comes by hearing God's word, but the key question in the entire passage is: "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Obviously, one can see the importance of first entering in through that door of instruction.

There is a twofold responsibility we have: we must enter the door of instruction in truth, not error; and, we must lead others to enter that same door. Jesus warned in the Sermon on the Mount of false teachers. The church must ever be alert to men who would attempt to "draw away disciples after them." The Lord also placed on our shoulders the tasks of winning the world for him. In the great commission he commanded all Christians to go into all the world and preach the gospel. This grave responsibility must be taken up by all true disciples with joy and love for the lost. May we all enter the right door of instruction, and do everything we can do take others with us.

(S. F. Hester moved to Walker County, Alabama at the end of world War II. Each of his sons are preachers as are many of his descendants. He died in 1982).

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8). "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Will someone explain how obedience that is produced by faith and motivated by love can be legalistic? Yes, the gospel is complete and when preached makes sons of God that serve as sons and not as slaves. What is needed is more preaching of the simple gospel.

(Franklin Camp was a Bible scholar who passed on to his reward last year. His prolific writing has been well received for many years and do follow him).

Is Jesus Coming Soon?

Continued From Page 2

few short months," then why the great commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel? The kingdom or church was to have a small, or mustard seed beginning, but grow to fill the whole earth (Mark 13). So, the commission and the very nature of the kingdom require some time before the Lord's return. The Lord expected time to continue long enough to carry out the commission, and for the kingdom to grow. He taught Peter that he would live to "BE OLD" (John 21:18, 19; II Peter 1:15). Paul taught that the day of the Lord was not at hand in the days of the apostles (II Thessalonians 2:1-12). God was not responsible for the idea then prevalent that Christ was coming soon. HE HAS NEVER REVEALED THE TIME TO BE EITHER SOON OR LATE. He simply teaches all to be ready (Mark 13:32, 33). If Christ does not soon come, death will. In either case, destiny is sealed (II Corinthians 5:10). Since the New Testament did not teach when written in the first century that Christ was coming before 1968, it did not then teach he would come soon. And the New Testament teaches now what it did then. It still teaches nothing as to the time of the second coming, other than that "YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE TIME IS" (Mark 13:33). If the New Testament did not teach when written that Jesus was coming soon, it cannot teach it now, for it has not changed its teaching and meaning since it was written.

But there is another passage often perverted to mean Christ will "SOON" come. Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). The "END" here referred to is the end of the Jewish nation, which came in A.D. 70. By that time the gospel had been preached "To every creature which is under heaven" (Colossians 1:23; Romans 10:18; Colossians 1:6).

(Brother Gus Nichols was the founder and editor of the Words of Truth for many years while serving as minister for the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, Jasper. He passed this life in 1975, and he being dead yet speaketh. JTS)

A Great Sin In The Church



Pervie Nichols

All sins conveniently fall into two classifications: (1) Sins of COMMISSION, (2) Sins of OMISSION.

Sins of omission are neglect of certain prescribed duties (Hebrews 2:1-4; James 4:17). Perhaps this sin will cause more of us to be lost than any other sin. **NEGLECT IN THE**

MATERIAL WORLD almost always leads to failure. Consider a rundown store with dirty shelves, whose owner neglects to keep it clean. The farmer who leaves his equipment out in the weather all winter is usually too careless to succeed. The wife who neglects her duty to be a keeper at home and permits her family to live in such an atmosphere of neglect will never succeed as a wife and mother. Marriages often fail because of such negligence. So in every phase of natural life the neglectful are never the successful.

NEGLECT IN THE CHURCH. The church of our Lord is often guilty of the sin of neglect. This was one of the first mistakes of the early church (Acts 6:1-10). Perhaps the chief fault of congregations today is not what they do that is wrong, but **WHAT THEY NEGLECT TO DO!**

How many congregations are guilty of neglecting the following: (1) To preach the gospel and carry the message to the lost? (2) To teach members and ground them in the truth? (3) To stand steadfast for the truth and against false doctrines and hobbies? (4) To emphasize Christian living? (5) To give as prospered? (6) To exhort, admonish and rebuke wayward members, the disorderly and willful absentees? (7) To withdraw from the disorderly and impenitent members regardless of class, financial or social standing, family ties or friendship? (II Thessalonians 3:6). It is almost impossible to persuade elders and other brethren to discipline the ungodly as the Lord commands. Hence, just about every sin in the catalog of sins (Galatians 5:19-21) is tolerated and condoned. Dead churches are nearly always due to the sin of neglect. No one has ever heard of a church dying when busy for the Lord. It may make mistakes, but its very activity will cause it to correct them and go forward.

NEGLECT OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS. Because of the sin of neglect many members are still babes in Christ. This is evidenced by their neglect of private prayer and Bible study; neglect of assembly, Bible study classes, worship; neglect of righteousness.

Such neglect causes spiritual death. A preacher arose to conduct the funeral for a back-sliding member and began by saying: "This corpse has been a member of the church for fifteen years."

A member who only comes and abides while the sermon is preached does no more than a corpse. He disturbs no one, but helps no one either. He bears no burdens, but is borne by the church. He contributes nothing, sheds no joy; he does no more than a corpse. A corpse is present when the sermon

is preached but does nothing about the sermon. It never goes out to actively obey it. Brother, Sister, are you like a corpse? Sit down and enumerate the things that you do for the cause of Christ more than a corpse.

When a Christian is busy for the Lord he will sin, but his activity will help to lead him to repent and pray. If he is neglectful and sins he may also

Be Sure You Are Right And Then Stand



Edsel Burleson

men will swear at you, then if you wear well, they will swear by you. First the sneer and then the cheer. First the curse, then the caress. First, the trial, then the triumph. First the cross, then the crown. For every scar upon thy brow thou shalt have a star in thy diadem. Stand somewhere and let humanity know where you stand. Stand for something and let humanity know what you stand for. Be sure you are right and then **STAND.**"

It takes courage to live the Christian life. Daily there will be efforts to get one to give up. The critical pressures cause many to bow to the god of pleasure. Others forsake the church and in so doing forsake the Saviour.

Several years ago, Albert C. Trent wrote in an Oklahoma City church bulletin about a brilliant Chinese student who was offered a fine position with the government. When asked why he refused the splendid offer and volunteered to preach the gospel for a mere pittance, replied: "During the Boxer Uprising I lived in an inland village where

The great apostle to the Gentiles declared: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). Someone has written, "Be sure you are right and then stand. At first you will be rejected, then you will be accepted. First

neglect to repent and pray. All a child of God has to do to be lost is to **NEGLECT** to obey the gospel (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). God blesses obedience, but condemns **NEGLECT.**

(Pervie Nichols was a faithful minister of the gospel and worker in the Lord's vineyard for many years. He edited a paper for many years. JTS)

there was a temple for devil worship. The Christians were led by the soldiers to that temple and ordered to renounce their religion and bow before the devil image or they would be executed. I saw one hundred and sixty-three of my townsmen walk by the devil god with heads erect, when a little bow would have saved their lives -- then out to a great beam over which they placed their heads for the swift stroke of the executioner's sword that sent their heads rolling in the dust. My father was one of that number. It was the unshaken integrity of their faith that thrilled me and gave me a longing for the new life. I must go back and tell my fellow townsmen of Christ who loves them, and of his power to save."

There is no quality more sorely needed in living the Christian life than courage. When the list of Christian graces was presented, the apostle Peter said, "add to your faith virtue" (II Peter 1:5). Virtue has been defined as "manly strength or courage."

William Cowper put it this way:
"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform
And plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm."

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
With blessings on you head."

(Funeral services were conducted for Edsel Burleson at the Palisades Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama on Friday, July 31).

The Love Of God For Man

W. C. Calloway

The love of God for us in an amazing thing to contemplate. He created the world for us (Isaiah 45:18). God wanted us to exist, made all the animals for us, and everything else that was made (Genesis 1 and 2). This shows his love for us! But God put his love on exhibition and displayed it before the world when he gave his Son to die for us. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his Only Son into the world, that we might live through him" (I John 4:19).

God created man, feeds and clothes him, and gives him all his gifts and blessings, yet man rebelled against his Maker. But, God still loves us and wants to save us in Christ. Isn't that wonderful love? Would we not have to be terribly wicked not to appreciate God's love toward us? "For God so loved the world . . ." (John 3:16). Never in the history of the world has there fallen from the lips of anyone a greater statement than this. Let us read and ponder it well.

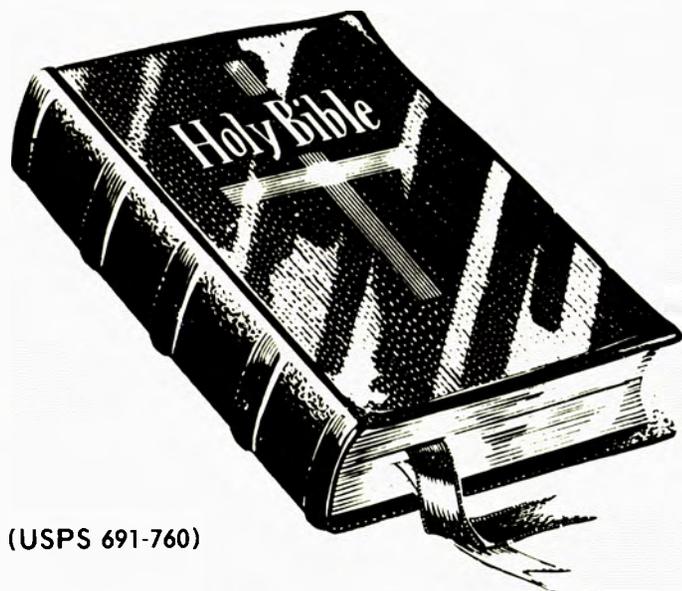
Judging by what God sacrificed for us, his love for us was unspeakable and full of glory. God looked down and saw man's ruined and lost condition, then looked all over heaven and found no angel, nor other celestial being who was precious enough to show his love for man. God decided to give his "only begotten Son" to come and die for us and that we might be redeemed.

"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). Even God could not have given a greater sacrifice than his Son. Paul says, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15). This is the way every faithful Christian feels when he contemplates such love, so amazing and divine.

Christ died for us when we were altogether unworthy of such a sacrifice. "But God condemned his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God loved and had anxious care for us when we did not care for ourselves.

To believe all this is to cause something to happen to us that we should never forget or get over as long as we live in the world. God's power, the power of the gospel comes in to work wonders in us when we believe God's story concerning the gift of his Son for us. God's love for us is the most powerful ingredient in the gospel message (Romans 1:16). It makes the gospel draw us toward Christ as if by a powerful magnet (John 6:44, 45; 12:32). Do not resist this love!

(Brother W. C. Calloway has been dead for only a few years, having preached at Mt. Harmon in Jasper for forty-nine years. JTS).



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Fest
Words of Truth and soberness."

Worth the
cents 26:25

VOLUME 28

SEPTEMBER 11, 1992

NUMBER 37

SPECIAL ISSUE: "VOICES FROM THE PAST"

The Basic Problem

Batsell Barrett Baxter

Ancient Israel was guilty of substituting an hour of worship for a week of righteous living. One of the most ancient and long-continuing problems is the problem of the great gap between the profession of religion and the practice of religion. Some years ago, I bought a copy of a book by C. S. Lewis, entitled, "The Great Divorce." Upon reading it, I found that it was not a book about marriage and divorce, but about the great separation that will come eventually between the righteous and unrighteous. Ultimately the greatest of all divorces is the separation between righteousness and unrighteousness. The problem of all God's people throughout the ages has been the problem of remaining loyal to Jehovah in the face of the temptations and pressures of the world. Ancient Israel was guilty of being righteous on the Sabbath and being worldly the rest of the week.

We are all aware that a man wears different kinds of clothing (Sunday suit, sports clothing and work clothes). All of these are right and good, for it is sensible to dress according to the requirements of the day.

However, this same kind of practice has also seeped into religion, and here it is not right. Often one wears his Christianity as he wears his clothes - well dressed on Sunday, but discarded during the week. Sometimes a person compartmentalizes his life, with religion in one tight self-contained compartment, having little influence on the areas of recreation, vocation and the other activities of his life.

CHRIST'S WAY IS A TOTAL WAY OF LIFE. IT MUST BE PRACTICED EVERY DAY! There must be no separation between professed and practiced religion. In our day we are sorely tempted to substitute an hour of worship for a week of righteous living bring the same disastrous effect as to ancient Israel.

These prophetic warnings are appropriate for us of this century, in a day when we are tempted to be so preoccupied with the material things of life as to crowd out spiritual values. Ours is also a world in

which sensualism has been given a prominence and an emphasis unheard of in past generations. This means that we are in constant danger of separating our worship from our daily living.

I am reminded of a warning from Paul from II Timothy 3:15. Notice that those for whom this was written were religious people, "holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof."

Another familiar passage emphasizes that goodness must accompany our concern for God's kingdom or church. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . ." Finally, look to James 5:16 which says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working."

Perhaps, many Christians do not need these prophetic warnings. They have mastered the problem and have narrowed the gap between the profession of religion and the practice of religion. But, others should seriously heed these God-given warnings and consider them a call to repentance, lest they continue in their divided way and be

eternally lost.

For most of us, however, these passages serve as a great warning lest we slip into the sin of ancient Israel, **SUBSTITUTING AN HOUR OF WORSHIP FOR A WEEK OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING. MAY WE STRIVE TO KEEP OUR WORSHIP FRESH AND MEANINGFUL AND GENUINE. MAY WE STRIVE TO KEEP OUR RELIGION AN EVERY-DAY AFFAIR, LETTING IT UNDERGIRD OUR ENTIRE LIVES.** Only then will our worship to God be acceptable. There are thousands of devout, God-fearing men and women who live their Christianity. They are humble servants and they are the salt of the earth. Follow them as they follow Christ. We must live Christ-like lives twenty-four hours of the day. **AN HOUR OF WORSHIP ON SUNDAY** does not take the place of a **WEEK OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING.**

(I esteem highly the time spent in brother Baxter's classes. If ever love and sincerity were present in anyone, it certainly appeared in his life. JTS)

Benevolence In The Early Church



W. T. Hamilton

The early church was a show-case of benevolence unequalled in human history. The need appeared in the **VERY EARLY** days of the church. In Acts 2 the need was so acute that some noble souls sold property to provide for others. The church was only a few days old when Barnabas is singled out as an example of liberality (Acts 4:34-37). This need arose among the multitude who came to Jerusalem to observe the Jewish feast and who, while there, heard of Christianity. Their new found joy made them stay longer than their provisions would last.

One is really not surprised to see such sacrifice

for Jews were required to leave some of the harvest in the field for the gleaners (Deuteronomy 24:19-22). When John the Baptist demanded fruits worthy of repentance, one of his requirements was, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none" (Luke 3:11). With a heritage like that, one would expect the Christ-like people of the first century to be concerned about others.

Many of the first century saints heard the lessons Jesus taught. Some of them may have been present when he told of the Good Samaritan. Others heard him tell of the Pharisees "who had omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, **MERCY** and faith." Perhaps others remembered the judgment scene most vividly, "For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat . . ." (Matthew 25:35-40).

The Jerusalem need was not the only time the

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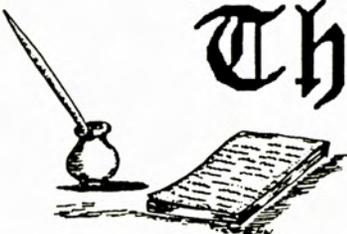
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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

The Bible Is Our Only Guide

Ira North

We readily see the necessity of authority in most every sphere of life. The matter of a correct standard of authority in religion is of supreme importance. There are standards accepted which are fallible, unsafe, and unsound. Jeremiah said, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). And the wise man declared, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

The Bible Is Sufficient

The Bible declares itself to be an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice (II Peter 1:2; II Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Word of God will save, guide, and comfort. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save you souls" (James 1:21). David declares, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). And Paul, speaking to a group of Christians stated, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:18). Since the Bible furnishes us unto "every good work," a human creed is not needed. If it contains less than the Bible, it contains too little; if it adds to the Bible, it contains too much; if it is different from the Bible, it is dangerous; and if it contains exactly the same, it is unnecessary (see Revelation 22:18, 19).

Better Safe Than Sorry

The journey of life is so important that it necessitates a guide that is infallible. Man travels this way but once and he is eternity bound with his immortal soul at stake. Suppose you were in charge of a store and it was your responsibility to measure cloth. Suppose further that you had a correct yardstick, one that met the standard of authority for weights and measures set up by our

B. C. Goodpasture

Not long since we heard a young preacher criticize an older preacher because he filled his sermons with quotations from the Bible. The unseasoned youngster dubbed the older preacher as being "old fashioned" -- as "old fashioned" as Christ and His apostles, who frequently interspersed Scripture quotations in their preaching.

When one berates the timely and frequent appeal to the Holy Scriptures, he betrays a woeful lack of knowledge of, and respect for, the "living oracles." If he is not a modernist, he is speaking the language and serving the purpose of the modernist. He has failed to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16). He is a stranger to the injunction of Isaiah: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20). He has failed to attain unto the high standard: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). He who thinks that he can express the thoughts of God in language superior to that of the sacred text thinks too highly of himself.

Recently an exchange carried these timely paragraphs:

"A writer of 'liberal' hue said: 'Surely the day of demanding proof texts is gone.' He believed that people ought not to require Scriptural quotations in support of a proposition.

"But the day of the proof text is not gone. Or if it is, it ought not to be. Or if the tendency is in that direction, the tendency should be stopped.

"Along with original illustrations and comments, Jesus made abundant use of the proof text method. His attitude was that 'the Scriptures cannot be broken (invalidated),' and again and again he

government. Would you keep an additional yardstick which was a little longer or shorter than the correct one? We have an infallible guide from God, the Bible, and should we take a chance with a fallible guide that is a little shorter or longer than the standard?

Human Creeds Divide

We could not logically ask others to give up one

appealed to the Scriptures in support of His teaching.

"Stephen, Philip, Peter, and Paul were rich in the use of Biblical material to back up what they said. Taking their cue from Jesus, they 'expounded the Scriptures.' The method of New Testament preachers and teachers was exemplified by Paul, who 'reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.'

"Unmitigated is the conceit which thinks that it can improve upon the method of Jesus and these men.

"No religious proposition is really proved until it is clearly supported by the Word of God. Hence, the Biblical use of proof texts finds abundant justification.

"He who objects to the proof text method proclaims:

1. That he has lost his taste for solid, Biblical preaching and teaching.

2. That he puts the value of human reasoning, observation, and opinion above the value of the Word of God in supporting his points.

3. That he holds certain beliefs which he is unwilling to submit to the test of the Scriptures, preferring to formulate them to suit himself.

But those who join Jesus in the conviction that 'thy word is truth' like to hear propositions proved by a 'thus saith the Lord.'"

The apostles as well as the pioneers of the Restoration, were armed with a "thus saith the Lord." They were invincible before every foe. The Word of God is living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). We must preach the Gospel, preach the Word. Our preaching must be scriptural, rather than ethical, philosophical, or metaphysical.

(B. C. Goodpasture began preaching in 1912 and became Editor of the Gospel Advocate in 1939, serving there until his death in 1977. It seems only natural to place this article in the space reserved for editoria. JTS).

human creed to accept another one of the same origin. Human creeds breed division, party names, and sects.

Let us all go back to the Bible and accept it as our guide -- our ONLY guide.

(From 1953 till his death in 1984, Ira North served as minister of the Madison Church of Christ, and as Editor of the Gospel Advocate from 1977 till 1984).

The Preaching We Need Today

H. A. Dixon

It is God's plan to save the world through preaching, though the plan and content of that preaching may sometimes appear as foolishness to men. Through the preaching of Noah, God offered to save men from the flood: and through the preaching of Jonah he sought to save the Ninevites; through the voice of one crying in the wilderness he gave the Jews opportunity to correct their lives and believe on the Messiah; through Spirit filled men God delivered a remedy for the murderers of Christ and to a Roman Centurion, the good news that God shows no respect toward persons.

Christ's message of salvation is the same in all generations but circumstances sometimes alter the needed point of emphasis. Jude may, due to urgencies at hand, change the emphasis from the common salvation to an urgent admonition to contend for the faith then under attack. Such is the need at this present time when many "strange" doctrines are being heard. The church as the blood-bought body of Christ, the house of God containing his family, the temple in which he dwells, and the called-out company of redeemed who belong to Jesus Christ is said to be, by some, but a denomination among denominations. The worship as practiced by Christians today is viewed

by them as nothing more than a group of traditions handed down by uneducated preachers and teachers of the word of God. Instrumental music, say they, is mere matter of one's choice, and the Lord's supper has no particular relation to "the Lord's Day." One writer commented that "we have a new breed of preachers who are not nearly convinced in "Church of Christ doctrine" as were those of the past half century."

No sarcastic approach will meet the challenges of the day-either by those who hold with the past or those who have accepted this present current of thought. In one recent article the author read of certain "Elizabethan speaking ecclesiastics who are so far behind the times that they think Petula Clark is a kind of flower." This seem to be the estimate of a young preacher of those who have for years used the scholarly King James and American Revised versions. To him these live in the past and know nothing of the present. Suppose one did not know some songstress of this modern type? Would he/she be the better or the worse? Such expressions can only widen an imaginary gap and lead a present church to turn away from the truth that has been taught and successfully defended against all types of perversions and distortions -- and that by some of the people being castigated through these remarks.

We do not change the language of our preaching to the vulgarity of common men. There is a dignity in the matter of salvation of the souls of men! God seeks to elevate man's thoughts, speech and deeds. Such expressions as being "intoxicated with Jesus" or "soul talks" do not dignify and elevate. Slang is unbecoming in polite society, and how much more in speaking or writing with regard to Christ and his church!

Who would ever imagine the language of the Spirit-filled Peter to Simon the sorcerer as found in Acts 8:20 put in Today's English Version of the New Testament?

God ordained Jonah to "Preach the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). Paul, by the same Spirit, enjoins "Preach the word," and elsewhere he warns that if angels or men preach a different gospel he is anathema. Philip preached Jesus unto the Ethiopian eunuch. So must we, and in so doing we will unfold the scriptures that center in Him. We will also show the plan by which he can and will save the lost. We will not be ashamed to rest the case for the souls of men upon his word. In simple and clear language we will tell the story of God's love as demonstrated in Jesus, and we will under all circumstances show why our hopes rest in him. In meekness and in fear we will seek to find and save the lost on the terms of his gospel.

(Possibly this was the last thing brother Dixon wrote for publication before his death. He was a beloved President of Freed-Hardeman College).

Benevolence In The Early Church

Continued From Page 1

early saints were called on to sacrifice for others. The same responsibility was borne by the churches of Galatia (2:10;6:10). James included in pure and undefiled religion: "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (1:27).

Their benevolence worked well, but not so well that they had no problems in the administration. The human element entered in them, too. The first sin recorded in the church was over the matter of giving for the poor. Ananias and Sapphira wanted praise such as Barnabas and others were receiving, and they wanted their money too. They tried to obtain both and their sin cost them their lives, and brought forth the first need for church discipline. When the situation was corrected, the church grew (Acts 11:4).

Soon after that, others thought that their widows were being neglected in the daily ministrations, and they complained. The apostles told them to select seven men "whom we may appoint over this business." The problem was solved and the brethren worked together. Notice the spirit they possessed in solving the problem. The ones complaining were Grecian. The ENTIRE CONGREGATION was told to "look ye out among you seven men." ALL seven selected wore Grecian names.

The Hebrews did not complain that the committee was "loaded" but in honor they preferred one another. No wonder they excelled in benevolence with that spirit! The early saints did not think they could excuse themselves by saying

they had no obligation to work with others. The Jerusalem brethren were in need. Paul worked among the churches of Macedonia and Achaia to help raise money for them. He used the liberality of the Macedonians to encourage the churches of Achaia, and the liberality of the Achaian congregations to encourage the saints of Macedonia, and he with Titus and at least two other brethren took the money to Jerusalem and administered it (II Corinthians 8:1-4; 16-24; II Corinthians 9:2). Thus, they were willing to cooperate to help the poor. The cooperation and unity of their work is shown in Romans 15:26. Their spirit of charity enabled them to work with others for a common cause.

One should not assume their zeal was blind. They recognized there were some people they should not help. Widows who were not widows-indeed, were not to be taken "into the number" (I Timothy 5:9-11). If a widow had relatives who could care for her, they were not to do so (I Timothy 5:4). If the relatives would not, they were "worse than an infidel" (verse 8).

Dead-beats would have had a difficult time in the early church. Those who would not work were not fed (II Thessalonians 3:10). If they persisted in laziness, they were disciplined (verse 14). The scriptures nowhere suggest that distribution was according to WANTS, but according to NEEDS (and there is a vast difference).

(W. T. Hamilton was a son-in-law to brother Gus Nichols).

The Doctrine Of Relativism

A. C. Dreaden

The general decline of faith, degraded morals and low-level spirituality of this age is disturbing to all sober-minded people. It is recognized as a threat to everything men hold as of permanent value.

The root of this condition is a Modernistic doctrine of "RELATIVISM." The idea is that truth is RELATIVE, not ABSOLUTE. The Modernist rejects the Bible as the Divine standard of faith and morals, and erects human reason, experience or conscience instead. Our purpose is to trace this doctrine in two areas of FAITH and MORALS.

1. Faithful Christians accept the Bible as authority; as the Divine standard (II Timothy 3:16, 17; John 17:17; 8:31, 32; Jude 3). These passages teach that the scriptures are inspired of God, authoritative, and all sufficient. The Modernists reject all these claims. Instead they accept human reason for Divine revelation. The only law they accept is subjective. Man's reason, conscience or good intentions become the criterion. This doctrine is paraded under the guise of "scholarship and scientific advancement." Young people who venture out too far from shore for their age and experience in the study of science, philosophy and psychology, and are overcome by the undercurrents of Modernism, and make shipwreck

Continued on page 4

The Greatest Institution On Earth

John D. Cox

Many fail to understand the greatness of the church of our Lord. It is the greatest institution on earth. If those who are out of the church understand fully the nature of this institution, it is difficult to see why they are not interested in becoming members of it. Many who are members would surely be more interested in working for the building of the church if they fully appreciated its greatness.

THE CHURCH OF THE LORD IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION ON EARTH BECAUSE IT IS THE HOUSE OF GOD (I Timothy 3:15)! It is God's family. Those in it are the children of God (I John 3:1, 2). To fail to become a member of the Lord's church is to fail to become a member of the greatest institution on earth. It is to fail to become a child of God. One deprives himself of all the blessings that the Father in Heaven offers his children if he remains out of his family -- the church.

THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION ON EARTH BECAUSE IT IS A SPIRITUAL HOME (I Peter 2:5)! It is not a material building as many appear to think. It is not a fraternal order founded by man. It is a divine institution. It is made up of "living stones," the souls of men. In it we are to offer up "spiritual sacrifices."

IT IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S HABITATION (Ephesians 2:19-22)! God dwells within the church. It is through the church that his will is done upon the earth in saving men. Since the church is God's habitation, every member of the

church should keep himself as pure as possible for, as a member of the church, he helps to make up God's habitation on earth.

IT IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION ON EARTH BECAUSE CHRIST BUILT IT (Matthew 16:18)! Therefore, it offers blessings that are eternal in their nature. The organizations and institutions which are founded by man are limited to man's feeble ability to extend benefits. Through the church that he built, Christ offers all that man needs for his eternal welfare.

THE GREATNESS OF THE CHURCH MAY BE SEEN FROM THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID FOR IT (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25)! Christ purchased it with his own blood. He gave himself for it. What solemn obligation this places upon all who are members of this blood-bought institution. This obligation cannot be met with "lip-service" saying that we love him while by our lives we deny him. Nor can we assure the full responsibility of church membership with a half-hearted service. The fact that Jesus gave "himself" for the church should challenge the best that is in us. WE should be filled with a fervent desire to make every contribution that we can to the work of the Lord in time, talent, money and influence.

THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION ON EARTH BECAUSE CHRIST IS THE HEAD: IT IS THE BODY OF CHRIST (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18)! The church is to be in complete subjection to Christ, its head. He alone has the right to dictate the terms of entrance into the church. He alone has the authority to legislate laws regulating the lives of those in the church. In all things, he is to have the preeminence

(Colossians 1:18).

IT IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION ON EARTH BECAUSE IN IT MEN ARE SAVED (Acts 4:12; II Corinthians 5:17)! There is no salvation out of Christ, but the church is the body of Christ; therefore, there is no salvation out of the church. Again, there is no salvation without the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 26:28; I John 1:7); but the blood was used to purchase the church (Acts 20:28); therefore to be saved by the blood of Christ, one must be in the church that was purchased with the blood.

(Editor's Note: In the late 1940's it was my pleasure to visit with relatives in Florence, AL, and to worship with the great Sherrod Avenue church where the beloved John D. Cox was the minister. He has been gone many years, but his good influence remains. JTS).

They Shall Be Filled!

A. R. Hill, Sr.

Hunger and thirst for food and water are two of the strongest human desires. Extreme hunger and thirst are the most compelling and urgent cravings of a human being. Nothing but food and drink will satisfy such desires. One will exert himself in making every effort possible to obtain food and drink which are so essential to human existence. Therefore, those who crave to do right, as the hungry and thirsty crave food and water, have the promise of being filled or satisfied.

When people make the same effort to learn the truth of God and obey it, that the hungry and thirsty make to obtain food and water, they have that promise of being fulfilled or satisfied. People usually learn what they want to learn and do what they want to do. If any person has a desire to know God and his righteous will, he can learn the truth of God and how to keep his commandments. One must fear God and work righteousness to be pleasing unto him. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Christ) is righteous" (I John 3:7; John 7:16, 17).

Many people no doubt have compelling desires which may be likened to hunger and thirst. Perhaps they are hungering and thirsting after temporal things, such as gold, silver, fame and honor. Such things will not feed and satisfy the hungry soul. It is an eternal truth that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

(A. R. Hill, Sr., began preaching the gospel in 1917).

The Doctrine Of Relativism

Continued From Page 3

of the faith. We are told that it is impossible to restore first century Christianity in the twentieth century, since there is no norm or standard by which to identify it. In repudiating the New Testament, they cut off all connections with the Restoration Movement.

2. This doctrine strikes a fatal blow at the morality of our age. "Sowing to the wind" by rejecting the Bible as authority and the teaching of Christ as a moral code of living, we have "reaped the whirlwind" in degenerate, indecent living, and the near collapse of society. Rejecting the restraints of the Bible in conduct, man is cut loose to "do that which is right in his own eyes." "RELATIVISM" leaves no authoritative standard of human conduct. "Truthfulness is relative." "Honesty is relative, depending upon what the majority practice and approve." "Everybody is doing it" sets the standard. If the line between right and wrong is finally erased, there is no defense against the anarchy of evil. Daily the line is becoming grayer and thinner.

The Christian respects the Bible teaching which presents a "great gulf" between the world and the church (I John 2:15, 16). Our duty is to practice

Christian non-conformity in the present-day society of materialism and sensuality.

When the Roman Empire fell, it was not destroyed by external forces, but internal decay. During the past 2,000 years, 21 civilizations have fallen, most of them by internal decomposition. Mary Craig, well-known Washington correspondent said, "Unless there is a change, deep down, in the American people, a genuine crusade against self-indulgence, immorality, public and private, then we are witnesses to the decline and fall of the American Republic." This is a factual appraisal by a well informed person of the world, not preacher talk. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

What can we do about these conditions? We can lift our voices in protest against the doctrine of "Relativism" and stand firm for the truth of God in our everyday living. We dare not do less, and we need not do any more.

(Brother A. C. Dreaden penned this article nearly thirty years ago. It is still as timely today as it was then, as well as truthful and necessary. JTS).

**"Fall Quarter Of
Southern Christian University"
Registration And First Class
Will Be Sept. 17 At 5:30
In Fellowship Room,
Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ Jasper
Subjects:
First Class: Romans
Second Class: Studies In The
New Testament; The Holy Spirit
Instructor: W. Gaddys Roy**

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Words Of Truth

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

th the
26:25

What Do You Think Of The Bible?



Winfred Clark

If someone asked you to put in writing your thoughts concerning the Bible, what would you say? How would you respond? Would you share the same feeling as David, or of the Lord Jesus Christ? One does not have to wonder what David thought of the Bible. We find his

feelings expressed time and again in Psalms 119. You will find him saying: "Thy word have I hid in my heart," "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," "teach me thy statutes," "Behold I have longed after thy precepts," and "I will delight myself in thy commandments." These give a small insight to David's thinking concerning the Bible.

The Lord's attitude toward the Bible may be found in a number of places, but let us see what he said in the sermon on the mount. Listen to these words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17, 18). There are at least five things one can learn of Jesus' attitude toward the Bible from these verses and their context.

HE SAW THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLE! He wanted them to properly understand his attitude toward the Bible; that he did not come to destroy the law. Rather he came to fulfill what had been said in the old testament concerning him. This was also true at the close of his life (Matthew 26:54). He was concerned as to how the scriptures would be fulfilled. He saw the Bible as being important.

HE SAW THE RELEVANCE OF THE BIBLE! The Bible was not outdated for the Lord and others to whom he spoke. He said, "I came . . . to fulfill." If the Bible did not pertain to him or was not relevant because of time or custom, then there would be no need for such. He affirmed as much in

the wilderness temptation when he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Jesus saw the relevancy of the Bible to the lives of men who seek to please God. Yes, even to his own life and to ours.

HE SAW THE PERMANENCE OF THE BIBLE! Jesus would not allow men to think the Bible was a passing thing as he said, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle in no wise shall pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18). Later he affirmed, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but by words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Peter would later affirm, "the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Peter 1:25). Just as Jesus saw the Bible as permanent, so should we. Yes, governments may rise and fall, constitutions may cease to be, but that will not be true of the Bible. In fact, we will meet the Bible beyond the grave at the judgment (John 12:48). All of its promises to us will still be intact as will the warnings. Let us take comfort and heed because of what the Bible has to say.

HE SAW THE REVERENCE DUE THE BIBLE! Knowing the Bible was of God, Jesus needed no one to teach him to respect it. He said, ". . . every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He knew that one's attitude toward God is seen in his attitude toward God's word. You cannot separate the two! He said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words . . ." (John 12:48). One cannot reject the word of Jesus and claim to honor and respect him. Even among men, one cannot deny a man's word and at the same time give honor to the man.

HE SAW THE OBEDIENCE DUE THE BIBLE! Jesus said he came "to fulfill." Such would require certain things of Jesus, even his death on the cross. Paul had this in mind when he said, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). The old testament had foretold his death in such places as Isaiah 53. When Peter sought to defend the Lord, he said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my

Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be" (Matthew 26:53, 54)? Jesus knew his obedience could not be deferred by prayer.

Jesus placed a premium on the one that shall do the least commandment. We see him say ". . . but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of God" (Matthew 5:19). That sounds as if our Lord viewed the commandments of the Bible as those which demand obedience.

As we see the Lord's thinking of the Bible, we do not doubt its importance. We know of its relevance, we are thankful for its permanence, and such deserves our reverence, and all of this should lead us to willing obedience. If this occurs, then our thinking concerning the Bible is correct!

--1602 West Hobbs Street, Athens, AL 35611.

The Book Of Books



Dalton Key

The Bible is by far the best book in all the world. It merits our reverence, our respect, our love, our belief, and our complete trust. It deserves our subjection and our willing obedience. Without this book we would be as helpless, hopeless nomads traveling the rocky road

to eternity with no purpose, no map, and no guide. Were it not for God's book the Bible, we would know nothing of divine law, will and love; we would know nothing of God's eternal purpose for man; we would be ignorant of Christ's sacrifice, shed blood, intercession, and advocacy. Without the Bible we would not know of our sin, our need for salvation; we would be without knowledge of

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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Lest We Forget



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

turned from the true and living God may have been the first teachers of evolution. The 'great father supreme' of evolution seems to have been Charles Darwin. Strangely enough he attended Cambridge University to be a minister, but found what he thought to be contradictions in the New Testament concerning Jesus. He turned to a study of the natural world, but not wishing to believe nothing he formulated his views regarding evolution in the absence of scientific evidence. Although he may have been the father of modern day evolutionists, he was not the last teacher of this subject.

Even within the church there are those who espouse the evolutionary theory, even if it is called 'theistic evolution.' Some contend for a brand of evolutionary creationism, contending that it harmonizes with the Scriptures. Is it any wonder that a 1991 Gallup poll suggests that 49% of the American public believes in some form of Darwin's theory of organic evolution. Of that number, some 40% profess a religious affiliation.

This is not an attempt to sell books, but Wayne Jackson and Bert Thompson have just edited In the Shadow of Darwin. This book is filled with a review of the teaching of brother John N. Clayton of South Bend, Indiana. Jackson and Thompson say that Clayton "has polished his clandestine methods of presentation so skillfully that only those who give serious study to the whole of his teaching can detect the manifold errors."

It may take books like this to remind us of WHY we are here and WHAT our purpose is while on earth. Only one generation that forgets God and his word can bring about apostasy. Lest we forget "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learnings . . ." (Romans 15:4).

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26, 27). The reason for man's being is given by the prophet Isaiah. "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7). Turning to the words of Solomon we find what God expects of his creation, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

BUT, from the beginning man wanted to depart from the God stated purpose for man and do "his own thing." Beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden we see the downward progression of man as he departed from his God ordained purpose. Moses wrote in Genesis 6:5 that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Later he would comment on the sinful condition of man saying that man "did not wish to retain God in their knowledge" (Romans 1:28). Not wishing to retain God in his mind, man has gone about to establish another system which is to explain everything IN MAN'S WAY. Basically that way is EVOLUTION.

Doctrines of evolution were taught long before the birth of Christ. The Greeks and others who had

"arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins . . ." (Acts 22:16).

THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN IN ORDER THAT MAN MIGHT KNOW MAN. We need to know that other people have burdens in life. We need to help each other as we walk the paths of life. Paul says: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). In Romans 3:23 we read: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" It is easy to see the faults of others and overlook our own. Let us help our fellowman.

THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN TO REVEAL GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION. God does not speak to us today in visions or dreams, but through His Son Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3). One can only find

salvation in Christ, nowhere else (Acts 4:11, 12; II Timothy 2:10; 3:14). When one is in Christ he is in His body, the church (Colossians 1:2, 18; 3:15). How do we get into Christ? The Bible teaches us that we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3).

THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN TO REVEAL MAN'S DESTINY. Some day man will leave this old world. You will leave this world whether you want to or not. You are going somewhere. The soul lives on after the body is dead. There are only two places that the soul can go -- heaven or hell. You make the choice. Jesus warns, "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). Do not reject the Lord. If you do, you will be lost.

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203.

Why Was The Bible Given?

Kenneth McClain

The Bible either came from God or man. Anyone who studies the Bible for any length of time will have no trouble believing that the Bible came from God. It would be very difficult to believe that man could produce such a book without supernatural aid. The same hand that made man is the hand that has written the sacred volume, the Bible. Why did God give us the Bible?

THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN TO REVEAL GOD TO MAN. The Bible is a permanent record of God revealing Himself to man. Not only does the Bible tell us of a supreme force, but tells us who that supreme force is. Without the Bible man might believe in a supreme force, but would not know the attributes of such a being. We need to study the Bible to find out about God and not listen to what man has to say about Him. Man often tries to make God to be what man wants Him to be. Isaiah 55:8 says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN TO REVEAL CHRIST TO MAN. How much would we know about Christ if it were not for the Bible? It is in the Bible that we find Christ to be the greatest teacher who ever lived on earth. He lived a perfect life so all can follow Him (I Peter 2:12). It is only through Christ that one can live the Christian life and go to heaven when life is over. James says that God's word is like a mirror (James 1:22-25). When we look into God's mirror, the Bible, it reveals things that we might not want to see. Perhaps this is why some have little or no desire to study the Bible. The Bible, like a mirror, only reveals what it sees. Sin will not go away by pretending it does not exist in our lives. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus to

You Can Rely Upon The Bible!



Flavil Nichols

You can rely upon the Bible! It is indeed reliable! Just as the writings of Shakespeare can be reproduced by comparing the many and varied copies of that author, so, by comparing the manuscripts and translations of the Holy Scriptures, we can be sure that we have the WORD OF GOD! In

fact, there are far more serious discrepancies among the copies of Shakespeare than there are among the manuscripts of the Bible.

Compare the span of time and the number of manuscripts of the sacred text with some of the other ancient writings:

1. The Ancient classical history of Caesar's Gallic War was composed about 58-50 B.C. with the oldest manuscript of it dating back to about A.D.

850. A gap of about 900 years exists between its writing and the oldest known copies. Only ten manuscripts of the history are known. Yet, all scholars accept these as reliable history.

2. The Roman History of Livy was written about 59 B.C. to A.D. 17; but, the oldest known manuscripts of it were made in about A.D. 300. Only 35 copies are known to exist.

3. The History of Thucydides, written 460-400 B.C., is reproduced from only eight manuscripts which were produced thirteen hundred years later (A.D. 900).

4. The History of Herodotus (450-425 B.C.) is translated from only eight known copies which were made from the "original" (?) one thousand three hundred years later (about A.D. 900).

Now, let us see how all this "stacks up" in comparison with the New Testament?

Revelation (the last book of the New Testament) was written about A.D. 89-96.

A span of only 250 years brings us to A.D. 350, the date of the CODICES. Some 4,000 PAPYRUS

FRAGMENTS, however, were written from A.D. 130 to A.D. 250. This puts them back within 30 to 150 years after John wrote Revelation. Furthermore, from almost the time John penned the original autograph, early "Christian Fathers" began to quote from the New Testament writings (A.D. 90 to A.D. 160, a span of 0 to 60 years).

There are literally thousands of copies of Sacred Scriptures which enable comparison, and give us assurance of a more accurate text for the New Testament than there is assurance of any text of William Shakespeare's writings! Jesus said, "My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

--Rt. 9, Box 541, Jasper, AL 35501.

The Book Of Books

Continued From Page 1

our eternal nature and promised destiny.

The word "Bible" is not found within the pages of God's eternal revelation to mankind. This matchless book refers to itself as the law (Psalms 119:97; James 1:25), the word (Psalms 119:11), the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11), scripture (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 3:16; Acts 17:11), doctrine (II John 9; II Timothy 4:2, 3), and truth (John 8:32; 17:17). The Bible describes itself as a sword (Ephesians 6:17), a fire and a hammer (Jeremiah 23:29), a seed (Luke 8:11), a lamp (Psalms 119:105).

The Bible is not a "dead letter." According to the Hebrew writer, God's word is both quick (alive) and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). It was by the word of God that the worlds were framed and the heavens were made (Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 33:6). The Bible quickens (Psalms 119:50), begets (James 1:18), cleanses (Psalms 119:9), purifies (I Peter 1:22), converts (Psalms 19:7), saves (Acts 11:14; James 1:21), pricks and cuts the heart (Acts 2:36-38; Hebrews 4:12), and will judge us in the last day (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12).

The Bible stands alone. It is unlike the books of man in that it is inerrant (Psalms 19:7; 33:4), verbally and wholly inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16; I Corinthians 2:10-13), and eternal (Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:24, 25). While the books of men rise and fall with respect to public acceptance and popularity, the Bible has throughout the years sustained a "best seller" status. Other works are undergoing constant revision, yet God's book is every bit as relevant today as it was when first etched out by the inspired penmen.

Through the ages, many and various attitudes have been held by men toward this Book of Books. Some have rejected; some have waged war against it; some have been apathetic toward it; and some others have loved, cherished, and respected it. King Jehoiakim cut and burned his Bible because he didn't care to hear or do what it demanded of him (Jeremiah 36:23). Unlike this wicked king, David loved God's word to the point of making it his constant meditation (Psalms 119:97).

What is your attitude toward the Bible?

--801 N.E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

The Most Hated Book In The World

Curtis A. Cates

Whereas certain volumes through the ages have perhaps met with man's dislikes and/or neglect, the Bible has been literally hated through the centuries -- hated unto death, had its enemies been successful in their avowed purposes. Every device available to man has been enlisted and assembled to pursue it as man's "greatest enemy" and to attempt to destroy it and to persecute its adherents.

IS THE BIBLE DANGEROUS AND EVIL? Why has the Word of God been so uniquely, viciously and relentlessly maligned and detested? Is it because the Bible is a curse to mankind? Does the Bible denigrate the dignity of man? Does its pure precepts encourage crime, corruptness and cruelty? Does the human condition deteriorate when its moral/ethical system is followed? The antithesis is very much the case; where the Bible has gone and continues to be respected, persons, families, cities and countries have been indescribably blessed and ennobled.

WHY DOES THE HATRED EXIST? Likely several things caused God's Book to be hated. 1. The Bible knows and reveals what is in man, for God the Creator is its Author (Hebrews 4:13). 2. The Bible condemns the evil in man. "The world cannot hate you; but me (and the Word of Christ) it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil" (John 7:7). 3. The Word of God is so powerful that it cuts to the heart (Hebrews 4:12); with most hearers, this makes enemies (Acts 13:46; Galatians 4:16; Acts 7:54). 4. The Bible speaks the authority of God and the Son (Matthew 28:18; 7:29); it gives "Thou shalt's," and "Thou shalt not's"; these are commands -- imperatives (Matthew 7:24-27; John 12:48; I Thessalonians 4:8). 5. The Word speaks the same message to everyone, no matter the background, nationality, education or pedigree (Acts 10:34, 35). 6. The Bible warns of judgment upon the disobedient

(Acts 17:30, 31; Romans 14:10-12). Thus, most men desire strongly to throw off what they consider "shackles," or "yoke of bondage," of the Bible. They despise the idea of an objective, absolute standard.

THE LORD'S CHURCH IS NOT EXEMPT! Regrettably, "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2) also threatens the church of Christ; the "lawless one" (II Thessalonians 2:8) is winning the souls of many children of God. A direct leading of the Holy Spirit and/or a new message is replacing the authority of the Word; some "scholars" (by their own admission) in the church have now joined their long admired heroes in modernistic academia in attacking the Bible and have become "pied pipers" to their own blind, gullible group of admirers (who themselves fill pulpits and professional responsibilities among us).

Compared to God, man is puny. How very revealing that some are joining "higher critical scholarship" in criticizing the Bible, when the Bible is the "discerner," the critic (kritikos) of humanity (Hebrews 4:12)! They criticize its absolutes, its pattern authority, its ability to be understood, its laws on marriage, its identity of the New Testament church, its plan of salvation and of acceptable worship, its being reliably translated, et al.

IS THE BIBLE IN JEOPARDY? Though the true friends of the Bible be few and feeble (I Corinthians 1:26), the eternal, living, infallible Word will stand (Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25) and its adherents remain secure. The hated Book lives on!!!

--4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118.

The Bible: God's Miracle Book

Roger Johnson

The Bible is unique in that it does not include a haphazard collection of writing but is an organic whole. Anyone who reads the Bible carefully will quickly realize that there is a plan behind the arrangement of the books. There is a unity about the Bible that is nothing less than marvelous. It is inspired, authoritative and entirely trustworthy. What are the grounds for believing this? Consider the following:

1. THE WONDER OF ITS FORMATION.

The sixty six books of the Bible were written by about forty different writers, who lived in different countries, spoke different languages and came from different backgrounds. The writers were a king, a doctor, a herdsman, a tax gatherer, a scribe, a fisherman, etc., and their writings spread over a period of 1600 years, so there could be no collusion among them. Yet, when these sixty six books are placed together there is a perfect unity and harmony about them and they all fit together like a jigsaw. What is the explanation? Only one: the Bible is God's miracle book!

2. THE CLAIM OF ITS WRITERS.

God is the author of the Bible, but he employed

many human writers. These writers claimed to be writing down the words of the Lord. They wrote, "Thus saith the Lord" -- an expression that occurs hundreds of times in the Bible. Divine authorship is claimed in II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21. What is the explanation of the fact that the writers in the Bible claim to have written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? The explanation is this: the Bible is God's miracle book!

3. THE ACCURACY OF ITS STATEMENTS.

It is commonly held that the Bible is full of errors; however, what seems to be discrepancies are cleared away after careful investigation. There is not one single proved inaccuracy in the whole Bible. It is accurate historically, geographically, genealogically, scientifically, psychologically, typologically, and verbally. What is the secret of the amazing accuracy? The Bible is God's miracle book!

4. THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS PROPHECIES.

Prophecy is history written in advance. In the Bible we have prophecies relating to places, events and persons. As an illustration, there are over thirty Old Testament prophecies relating to

Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion which were all fulfilled within twenty-four hours when he died. What is the explanation of this prophetic accuracy? It is this: the Bible is God's miracle book!

5. THE INSISTENCE OF ITS MESSAGE.

There is one message which runs right through the Bible. It is the message of God's great love for sinful humanity, of the gift of His Son, of His provision of salvation. This great message is stated as early as Genesis 3:15 and we trace it through the Bible until we come to the final appeal to sinful man to accept the gospel invitation (Revelation 22:17). How do you account for the fact that there is one insistent message running through the whole book? The explanation is this: the Bible is God's miracle book!

Thank God, the Bible is God-given, is inspired and is therefore authoritative and absolutely trustworthy! The Bible is God's miracle book! Let us love it, believe it, learn it, practice it, defend it, and pass it on to others.

The Bible Passes The Test

Wayne Jackson

The Bible contains two kinds of information. Some of it can be checked; some of it cannot. The Bible contains hundreds of references that arise out of the background of human history. These may be tested for accuracy. If it is the case that the Bible is demonstrated to be absolutely precise in thousands of historical details, it is not unreasonable to conclude that its information in other matters is equally correct. One of the most amazing features of the Bible is its uncanny reliability in the smallest of details. Let us note a few examples of incidental biblical precision.

During his personal ministry Jesus once passed through the region of Samaria. Near Sychar, the Lord stopped for a brief rest at Jacob's well. He engaged a Samaritan woman in conversation, during which he suggested that he could provide the woman with water which could perpetually quench her thirst. Misunderstanding the nature of the Master's instruction, the woman, alluding to Jacob's well, declared: "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep" (John 4:11). The statement is quite correct for even now, some twenty centuries later, Jacob's well is approximately 80 feet deep. That is the equivalent of an eight story building.

Reflect upon another example. In Acts 10 there is the account of Peter's visit in the city of Joppa. Luke declares that Peter was staying in the home of Simon, a tanner of animal hides. Then the historian says, almost as an afterthought, "whose house is by the seaside" (Acts 10:6). Hugh J. Schonfield, a scholar who is certainly no friend to Christianity, has commented on this passage:

This is an interesting factual detail, because the

tanners used sea water in the process of converting hides into leather. The skins were soaked in the sea and then treated with lime before the hair was scraped off.

Consider another interesting case of Bible precision. When Paul was enroute to Rome for trial, the ship upon which he sailed became involved in a terrible storm. When it eventually became apparent that the vessel was in a very dangerous circumstance, the crew cast the ship's anchors into the water. At the same time, they "loosed the rubber bands, hoisted up the foresail, and aimed the ship toward the beach" (Acts 27:40). There is an interesting and subtle point in the original Greek text that is not apparent in the English King James Version of the Bible. The original language actually says that they "loosed

the bands of the rudders" (plural). This is amazingly precise, for in ancient times, ships actually possessed two paddle-rudders, not a single rudder as with modern vessels. In 1969, a submerged ancient ship was discovered in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Cyprus. An examination of the ruins gave evidence of dual rudder-oars by which the boat was steered (see National Geographic, Nov. 1974), thus demonstrating the remarkable accuracy of Luke's record.

The Bible can be tested repeatedly -- historically, geographically, scientifically, etc. And it always passes the test! Its incredible accuracy can only be explained in terms of its divine inspiration.

Walking Bibles

Harold Blevins

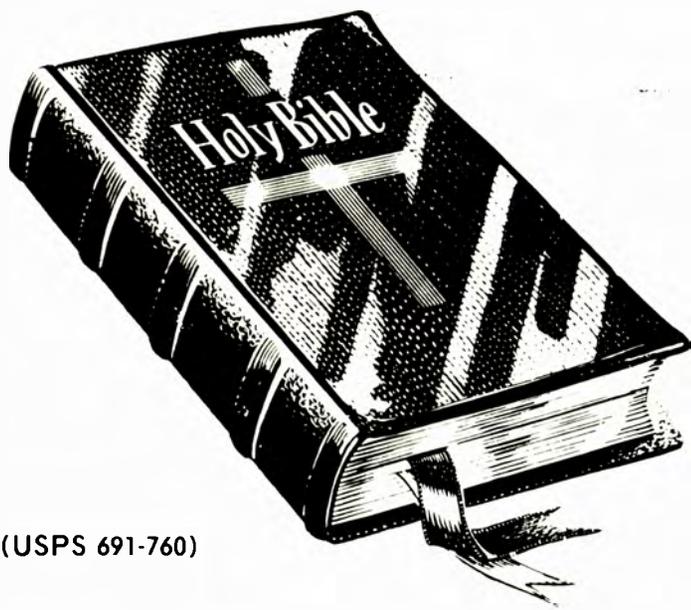
We read in II Corinthians 3:2, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." Therefore, the congregation that meets in this place is looked upon as the walking Bible. Very likely we are the only Bible that many folks will ever read. This is a most awesome responsibility indeed.

A colorful century ago, such like Christians were characterized as the "Bible totin', Bible quotin' church of Christ." That was high praise indeed. Why not today? Are we just as they? Do we walk and talk as they? If not, then we are guilty of deception for Christ taught, "Be not deceived; evil

communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33). The church that Christ purchased with his blood MUST be separate from the world (Acts 20:28; II Corinthians 6:14-17; James 4:4; et. al.).

When and only when we desire to be a peculiar treasure of Christ will the church planted in this very community be prospering for the Prince of Peace. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (Exodus 19:5). Paul preached that we must learn the lessons from the past (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:5-13).

--Route 2, Box 10A, Tiptonville, TN 38079.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus. Words of Truth and soberness."

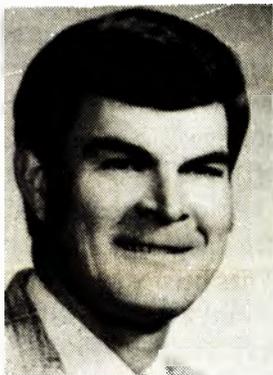
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NUMBER 39

Righteousness Or Disgrace?



Ray Hawk

The 1980's saw an invasion by the Japanese onto our shores. We hear folks complain about Americans losing their jobs because of the Japanese market. Japanese are buying up our land and our businesses. They are exporting their companies here to make their cars and trucks for us to buy. Yes,

we complain. But, who are the real bad guys?

When did Americans decide to make second rate goods? When did we decide it wouldn't hurt us to have people using drugs or alcohol on the job? Why should we blame the Japanese, or any other country, for taking pride in their craftsmanship and quality products? Why should we censure them for being hard workers? Why should we fault them for being conscientious?

God stated an eternal principle that remains true today.

"Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor" (Proverbs 12:24 NIV).

"The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work" (Proverbs 21:25 NIV).

America is no longer on the cutting edge of world competition. Too many of our children cannot read or write. Learning is a joke. Most want a free meal ticket. The body beautiful is our god while our minds are fried on drugs. We degrade religion while worshipping at the feet of materialistic humanism. Faith in God and obedience to His word are demeaned while atheists preach evolution (Psalm 14:1). Our nation preoccupies itself with self gratification (Matthew 6:33). In our greed we want to get rich by cutting our own throat and stepping on others (Galatians 6:2). One cannot burn the candle at both ends without getting burned (Proverbs 6:27). No nation can turn its back on God and expect to prosper (Jeremiah 2:32;

Hosea 4:6). Wickedness soon brings a country to its knees.

Would it be a good thing if the Japanese bought all our farm lands, businesses, and commerce and we had to work for them? Those who wanted to work would. Those who do not would not. Those who drank on the job or used drugs would be fired. The work ethic, which America once had and was proud of, would exist again. Workmanship, craftsmanship, quality, and pride would again be smiled upon. Schools would once again be a place where study took place and teachers were respected. Criminals would be meted out tougher punishment and the justice system would be swift and to the point. Our streets would once again belong to the tax payer.

Are the Japanese perfect? No. Are they better than we are? No. One race of people is not better

nor any worse than another race. A race is what it makes of itself. All Americans, whether white, black, yellow, or brown, are looked upon by the rest of the world as incompetent, lazy, spoiled, ignorant, and greedy. Many look upon us as a bully that is about to have the rug pulled out from under him. That's the impression we have made for ourselves.

It seems that what this country needs is a large injection of righteousness. That righteousness must begin with each of us and spread throughout this nation. It must start with the little things and build to the larger ones. Self respect, pride at the work place, integrity, morality, justice, and respect for others must return to our nation.

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

--1490 Campbell Street, Jackson, TN 38305.

False Teachers (Matthew 7:15)

Jimmy Clark

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31). Paul would not have declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) without warning the brethren about false teachers. Such is also true in every generation. Consider some thoughts from the Lord's warning.

(1) THE FACT OF FALSE TEACHERS. The Lord would not warn man about something that was not factual. However, there are men and women today who think that religious devotion and a few scriptures make one a dedicated disciple

of Christ. Paul's message to the Ephesian elders points out that the church is not excluded from having false teachers. This is hard for some in the church to accept. Paul told Timothy about an actual case of some who departed from the faith. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:19-20). It is imperative that all men realize the fact of false teachers and live their lives accordingly.

(2) THE FACADE OF FALSE TEACHERS. Jesus spoke of these teachers as those "which come to you in sheep's clothing." The devil knows that error must be disguised in order for man to fall for it. Genesis 3:1-6 shows this to be true. The rational mind does not want to be wrong, much

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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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Joe T. Spivy, Sr.....Editor

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Women And Personal Work

Jeanette Jackson

There is a great need in the Lord's church for women who will do personal work.

When we think of personal work we think of door knocking, house to house, or direct one on one Bible teaching and this is very important. But in our study of God's word we can learn of many other types of personal work.

There are several examples we can read in the Old Testament. In the book of Exodus we read of the personal work done by Moses' sister in watching over him while he was hid in the bulrushes, and then going to get his own mother to care for him.

There are many other women in the Old Testament that did personal work. In Joshua 2 we learn of the great work done by Rahab in hiding the spies. Their lives were saved because of her and her willing heart. II Kings tells about the Shunammite woman and her husband building a room and furnishing it for the prophet of God to use when he traveled that way; this was personal work. In II Kings 5 we read of the personal work done by a little maiden of Israel, who told Naaman of the prophet of God, Elisha; she was not afraid of getting involved.

In the book of Esther we read of another example of personal work. Esther's appearance before the king to save the Jews. This book also teaches another great lesson for women in the story of Vashti.

When we begin to study in the New Testament we read of women who did personal work. We read in John 12 of Mary and her love for the Lord. She anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair.

In Acts 9 Dorcas did personal work in making

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The Editor's Pen

Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

Virginity Is Not An Ugly Word



Joe T. Spivy, Sr.

according to a survey released . . . by federal health officials."

Statistics gathered by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), indicate that 54% of the 11,631 high schoolers (9-12) surveyed say they have had sexual intercourse. Dr. Lloyd Kolbe, director of the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, said, "We are particularly concerned about the increase at each grade level." The increase to which he refers is: ninth graders, 40%; tenth graders, 48%; eleventh graders, 57%; and twelfth graders, 72%.

The article gave no reasons for optimism as 78% of the "currently sexually active students" spoke of using some form of contraception, such as the pill, condoms or . . .

The homes and schools of America give us no reason to be optimistic because they do no foster or promote what has become known as "middle class, Anglo Saxon moral standards." Many people mention such and make a joke about it. To them a moral standard is for the unlearned, not for the enlightened era in which we live. The way to live today is to "eat, drink and be merry today and do not worry about tomorrow UNTIL THEN."

It thrills my heart to realize that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a VIRGIN when he was born. It thrills me to remember that where married, both my wife and I were such. We did not think it ugly to be such then, nor do we regret that we "waited to give ourselves to our mate in marriage." On the other hand I know of a couple quite differently.

The headline of the NATION/WORLD section of the paper read, "Virginity grows rarer in high schools" (the Birmingham News, January 4, 1992). A.P. writer, Robert Byrd began, "More than half the nation's high school students have had sex, including seven of ten by the senior year,

The husband was the only member of the male wedding party which had not slept with the bride. As you might suspect, the marriage ended in divorce because of the promiscuity of the bride.

Although men may change, the greatest need of man for salvation from sin has not changed. Although man's thinking about morality (right and wrong) may change, God's view of right and wrong change not (Hebrews 13:8). The people of God in by-gone eras have highly esteemed virginity and virgins. Should we not do so as well?

In this enlightened twentieth century, it would be well for leaders and followers to realize that God rules in the affairs of men and that virginity is not an ugly word. "Righteousness (still) exalteth a nation: but sin is (still) a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Let us not forget!!

(EDITORIAL CHANGE: This is the last issue of Words of Truth that I will edit on a regular basis. Glenn Colley will assume the duties of Editor with the first issue in October. It has been a joy to serve you as Editor and I look forward to sharing articles from time to time in the future. JTS)

From The Elders Of The Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ:

Several months ago brother Joe Spivy took over the editing of the Words of Truth for us. Joe is to be commended for the fine job he has been doing with this paper. Joe has had double duty while we searched for another minister and to him we say "thank you."

Brother Glenn Colley came to work with us September 1, 1992 and he will be editing this paper beginning October 1st. Glenn comes to us from Salem, Virginia where he has been working as minister of Westside Church of Christ. He graduated from Freed-Hardeman University, and has been a full-time minister for over ten years. He is in his early thirties, married to the former Cindy Holder and they have two children, Caleb and Hannah.

We welcome Glenn and family to this area and are looking forward to good things to come out of our association together.

Facing The Bands Of The Wicked

Neal Pollard

"The bands of the wicked have robbed me: yet have I not forgotten thy law." Psalm 119:61

From David's book of poetry have come the greatest words of comfort ever embraced by godly men. The man after God's own heart loved God enough to meditate longingly upon His word. The psalmist penned his greatest tribute to the

scriptures in Psalm 119, wherein almost every one of the 176 verses mentions God's word or an appellation. David emphasized the treasure paid to the spirit of those who cling to the ways of heaven. We do well to occupy our minds with the precepts of the Bible in the average, or even good days of our lives because times will come when "the bands of the wicked" will have robbed us. What will we

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Facing The Bands Of The Wicked

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do then?

First, let us consider the bands of the wicked. All of us must come in daily contact with individuals who malign godliness and anything morally uplifting. These people are easily seen and even more easily avoided. Only those at their very weakest will allow themselves to be trapped in unrighteousness with so little resistance. But the bands of the wicked can wrap up pulpits, leaderships, and even the strongest men and women by wrapping its victims up more subtly. For instance, our attitude or self-esteem can become so injured that Satan is allowed entrance into our hearts. Or, we can entertain negative thoughts. Perhaps, a given situation causes us to alter our convictions just one time or because of the nature of a particular circumstance. The bands of the wicked might not necessarily coil itself around our influence, but rather our hearts. Satan prefers the back door anyway (cf. I Peter 5:8; I Peter 2:1; I Timothy 4:1-2). If he can manage to pervert our hearts, he can always destroy our influence.

Next, consider what the bands of the wicked do.

THEY ROB US!! Oh, the precious commodities of influence, talent, peace, and hope that have been stolen by the cords of wickedness. God created us with the capacity to respond to the tough choices of life by reasoning and discerning right and wrong. God also created us with the ability to overcome when opposed by unrighteousness. But we must make the right choice when in the role of decisionmaker. And, we must be the type of individual who is spiritually elastic enough to bounce back when persecuted for the sake of Christ. Like David, let us beware of him who "enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way," for "the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). David was aware of the spiritual poverty that results when the wicked are allowed the fellowship of the heart.

Finally, the bands of the wicked are broken by remembering the law of the Lord. The language of David refers to a recollection of the Bible and its principles; how else can man break the confining straits of the devil? In Psalm 119, David recounts his meditation, continency, and delight in the study of God's word. Paul told Timothy to give

attendance to reading (I Timothy 4:13). Peter encourages us to grow in our knowledge of Christ (I Peter 3:18). Jesus states, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). We are assured that the will of God is for our freedom from the bonds of sin. Too, we see the bands of the wicked for what they are -- Satan's attempt to keep us enslaved. If we never forget God's law, we can never forget his promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

Not Removing The Ancient Landmarks



Don Williams

"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28). A landmark served as a boundary that was placed at the end or beginning of someone's land. God did not allow man to tamper with these markers or boundaries. In Deuteronomy 27:17, he wrote "Cursed be he that

removeth his neighbor's landmark, and all the people shall say, Amen." This idea is also expressed in Deuteronomy 19:14.

Just as God did not want man tampering with those boundaries that had been set many years earlier by the particular family's forefathers, so spiritually God does not want us tampering with those boundaries he has set forth in his word. Today there are some who would want to change the boundaries concerning women's role in the Church. They argue that the statements of I Corinthians 12 and 14 are cultural -- that is, they apply only to the people of Corinth, in their time and situation. Some might say, "Just as we no longer wear the veil of their day, so also we can now take the veil off the lips of women!"

Although I agree that women now have a greater position of prominence within the American workplace (and rightly so, if she is qualified in that position) still that does not give her the privilege of exercising that dominion within the work of the church (and I agree with the assessment that Christian women are often the backbone of many good works within any congregation), still she is limited by God as to her public leadership in worship. In I Timothy 2:11-14, Paul wrote, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp (have) authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

God goes back to Creation to give reasons as to

Women And Personal Work

Continued from page 2

garments for the widows. In verse 36 the Bible says she was "full of good works and alms deeds which she did." Lydia did personal work (Acts 16) when she had Paul and his company stay at her house.

We read in the Bible concerning Timothy and his great work with Paul, and we read in II Timothy 1:5 of the unfeigned faith of Timothy, which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. Personal work had been done at home by those who loved him. Do you think Eunice and Lois stopped doing personal work with Timothy after he was a grown man? Our teaching in a personal way continues as long as we live, both by what we say and what we do. As we grow older our bodies begin to get tired, and we become sick or discouraged, and we stop our personal work even with those we love most. It is very important that we as wives, mothers, and grandmothers continue in our service to God. We are teaching a great

lesson to so many in the way we handle all the problems that come our way in later life. Many times our grown children are not faithful, so we become lukewarm in our attendance of services and our concern for our fellowman. There is no way we can influence them to come back if we are in a lost condition ourselves, or if our faith is so weak we become bitter with life.

We must all do personal work and be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10). The young mothers in the church can do no greater personal work than in rearing their children to be faithful Christians. They can do personal work in calling those absent from worship services, shut-ins, etc. God expects us to do personal work.

Let us determine to choose the good part (Luke 10:42), and live so it can be said of each of us "She hath done what she could" (Mark 14:8).

--5222 Edgewood Road, Adamsville, AL 35005.

False Teachers (Matthew 7:15)

Continued from page 1

less to suffer the consequences of error. Therefore, false teachers must be presented in a righteous format. Because of this, one must look deeper than the surface to see if the truth is presented or not. It is necessary that everyone ask himself questions concerning the things that he hears. "What is really meant by those words?" "Where will such lead in the final analysis?" "Does this harmonize with what God has already said?" The Lord has always

encouraged people to investigate the matters that have to do with the soul. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). "Therefore, let all not look on the things after the outward appearance" (II Corinthians 10:7). "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

Continued on page 4

Hold On . . . Good Things Will Come

Kenneth McClain

The apostle Paul writes, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). God has many good things in store for the believer in Christ based upon the condition that we faint not. Faintheartedness is one of our worst enemies in living the Christian life. Who among us does not need encouragement at times? Christians need to encourage one another.

ONE CAN FIND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE LORD. David at one point in his life, was greatly distressed and the people spoke of stoning him. "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." It is faith in the Lord that keeps us going forward in the Christian life. David also said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalms 27:13).

WE NEED TO HOLD ON WHEN TEMPTATIONS COME. Temptations come with great weight and mighty power upon those who are striving to live the Christian life. There are times when circumstances surround us and we have the spiritual strength to easily brush off any temptations that Satan may throw at us. However, there are times and circumstances when it seems that it is just right for Satan's attacks to get in on us and weaken our faith. Peter must have experienced such a time when he denied his Lord. Jesus said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

WE NEED TO HOLD ON WHEN TRIALS COME UPON US. We can rest assured that trials will come. Every person who has lived very long has faced trials. Someone has said, "The trials of life are fierce and grieve the soul of man and make it difficult to live sweetly amidst his fellowman." Peter admonishes us, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be

Not Removing The Ancient Landmarks

Continued From Page 3

why women are limited in public worship. It is not cultural, but it is tied to creation -- man was first made, then woman. Woman (Eve) sinned first, and therefore God told her in the garden, "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16).

Contrary to many man-made churches today, we must not remove these boundaries for women that God has set. Women can teach ladies, as well as children. There are many good works that she can participate in, under the leadership of godly elders. She can and must participate in worship, but not in a position of leading or directing the service in any sort of public manner. We must respect the boundaries of God, and not remove these landmarks. I do not know of any Christian woman who would like to violate this principle. PRAISE GOD!

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7). Through all trials we must be found faithful and prayerful.

WE NEED TO HOLD ON WHEN WE ARE CHASTENED BY OUR LORD. The Hebrew writer says, ". . . My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not" (Hebrews 12:5-7)? God chastens us for our good as an earthly father chastens or corrects a child for his good.

WE NEED TO HOLD ON WHEN IT COMES TO CARRYING BURDENS. Galatians 6:5 states, "For every man shall bear his own burden." In that same chapter we are told to "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (verse 2).

The High Priest, A Type Of Christ



W. Gaddys Roy

the high priest and the blood were typical of Christ. However, in this instance, we are concerning ourselves with the high priest as a type of Christ.

The high priest was fully devoted to his sacred work and did not engage in temporal affairs. Jesus was totally engaged in doing the will of His Father and fulfilling His purpose of saving the lost (John 6:38; Luke 19:10).

The high priest was appointed by God. No man takes this honor unto himself, according to Hebrews 5:4. Christ, who is our high priest, was called and appointed by God (Hebrews 2:17; 3:1).

The high priest was free from all physical infirmities and defects. He was also to avoid touching any dead body (Leviticus 21:10-24). Jesus, our high priest, was holy, undefiled and separated from sinners. He had not one defect of character (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; I Peter 2:22).

High priests were consecrated to the office. The priest had to wash with water before entering into the tent of meeting. He also had to be anointed with oil, and a sacrifice had to be presented to God on his behalf (Exodus 29:4, 7, 10-14). Christ was baptized, not for remission of sins as we are; but He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit when at His baptism the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and abode upon Him (Matthew 3:16; John 1:32, 33; Acts 10:38). Jesus, after living a sinless life, sacrificed Himself for the sins of the world (Hebrews 2:9; 9:26). Inasmuch as Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice, He is called, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John

1:29). Not only are we to bear the hardships and trials of this life but we are to help others do such; and in doing so we are fulfilling the law of Christ. Someone said, "Spiritual beauty can never be reached without cost." Blessings often come from burdens we bear. The Lord did not see fit to remove Paul's thorn in the flesh, but he assured him that he would not be overtaken by it. We can be like Paul. With the Lord's help we can bear any burden that might come upon us. The apostle Paul said, "If the Lord be for us, who can be against us?"

Yes, good things will come to those who are faithful to the Lord. ". . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

--2842 Shelby Street, Indianapolis, IN 46203.

1:29).

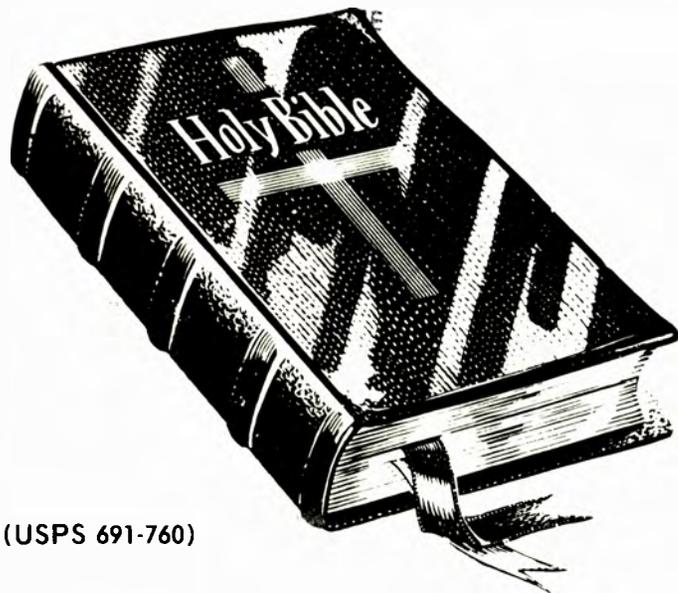
The high priest went once a year into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle and sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat, making atonement for his sins and the sins of the people. The atoning blood and the smoke of the incense which covered the mercy-seat would, of course, be an intercession for the people, and they would therefore be blessed (Leviticus 16:3-16; Hebrews 9:7-14). Jesus, our high priest, made an atonement, not for Himself, because He had no sins, and not with the blood of animals, but with His own blood He obtained eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:7-14; 10:9, 10). Christ, our High Priest, is now at the right hand of God making intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1-3). Christ blesses us, and all our sins are forgiven when we accept the terms of reconciliation through Christ (Acts 2:38; 3:26; II Corinthians 5:17-21).

The high priest under the Old Testament had charge over the tabernacle (Hebrews 9:6, 7). Christ has charge over the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 10:21). Our service to Christ today must be "doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6). Therefore, as Christians we do not start churches of our choice, nor do we worship and serve God as we please; but we do God's will from our hearts.

The high priest gave judgements and made decisions in matters of controversy (John 18:12-14). Jesus has all power and authority throughout the Christian age, and at His coming, He will judge the world (Matthew 28:18-20; 25:31-46; II Timothy 4:1).

The high priests of the Old Testament had their successors by reason of death (Hebrews 7:23). Our High Priest, Jesus, has no successor by reason of life, for when He was raised from the dead, He is alive forever more (Hebrews 7:24, 28; Romans 6:9). This shows Christ to be not only the perfect High Priest, but also the perfect sacrifice for mankind.

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Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; I speak the words of truth and soberness."

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26:25

VOLUME 28

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NUMBER 40

Stop Separating What God Has Put Together



Vance Hutton

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). This thought could be stated as the following, "Stop separating what God has put together." Surely this noble command is not limited to the subject under consideration in Matthew 19 alone. This

is a divine principle. It is a statement of the authority of God and of the superiority of God over man. Let us notice together some of the things that the Almighty has joined together. Concerning such things, no man, has a right to separate. To separate is to rebel, to rebel is to sin, and to sin and continue there is to expect the wrath of God in judgment against such.

A) HUSBANDS AND WIVES HAVE BEEN JOINED BY GOD: Romans 7:2 and I Corinthians 7:39 teach that marriage is for life. It is to be a solemn oath of union in which each party vows to be faithful til death separates them. Sin will always be involved when a marriage is broken.

B) CHRIST, HIS CHURCH, AND HIS COMMANDS HAVE BEEN JOINED BY GOD: These are ever so closely connected. You cannot have one separate and apart from the other. Christ is head of the church and the church is His body (Colossians 1:18). Christ is savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). The process that puts one into Christ puts one in the church (Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13). Christ is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey His commands (Hebrews 5:9). Dare any man try to choose one of these at the expense of the other?

C) FAITH AND OBEDIENCE HAVE BEEN JOINED BY GOD: One of these without the other is to no avail. James 2:18-26 speaks of the folly of

faith without obedience. Hebrews 11 is given to show the value of an obedient faith. Galatians 5:6 speaks of the value of a faith that works by love. Jesus would refer to those that believe only but do not obey as children of the devil (John 8:31-44). Let us believe with all our hearts but let us ever be willing to obey because God has forever joined the two together.

D) GOD HAS JOINED BAPTISM AND REMISSION OF SINS: This may seem illogical to you but it is forever true. Acts 2:38 and a host of other passages teach that remission of sins is granted a penitent believer at the point of immersion in water. Let no man separate the union formed by the Lord in heaven.

E) GOD HAS JOINED SPIRIT AND TRUTH WORSHIP: John 4:23-24 forever commands worship to be done in spirit and truth. Our Worship to be acceptable must be in reverence and due

respect to the object of our worship and this is to be coupled with authority of the New Testament scriptures for each thing done. Let no man separate this union spoken of by our Lord.

F) GOD HAS JOINED FAITHFULNESS AND SALVATION: If we are faithful, the Lord says salvation can be ours. Our conviction to heaven must be stronger than even our love for life (Revelation 2:10). Only if we endure to the end can we have eternal life (Matthew 10:22).

G) GOD HAS JOINED THE HOPE OF HEAVEN WITH PURITY OF LIFE: Jesus said the pure in heart would see God (Matthew 5:8). Hebrews 12:14 speaks of no man seeing the Lord unless he is holy in life.

God has joined these things -- let no man separate.

--Box 785, Double Springs, AL 35553.

One Scripture Sermons

Don Deffenbaugh

A member of the Lord's church once talked to a preacher about his preaching. In describing his own preaching the preacher said that he usually used just one Scripture.

The one Scripture sermon is pretty popular right now. It gives at least a Scriptural flavor to the remarks being made by the preacher. The one Scripture is used much like the cook uses spices in her food preparation. One Scripture, a little current theology, and a large measure of "feel good in your sin" and the sermon is complete.

Many in the audience where such a sermon is preached go away feeling good and believing that they have had a rich spiritual experience.

The truth of the matter is that there can be no gospel preaching done when the gospel is not used.

Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

Gospel preaching brings the audience face to face with their sin (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38, 17:30) and the person who is living in sin and refuses to repent and obey God does not go away feeling good. His conscience hurts him!

The one Scripture, "feel good in your sin," sermon misleads people and leaves a lost world lost. Herein is the greatest tragedy of it all.

"Preach the word" (I Timothy 4:2)!

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Words Of Truth

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--Acts 26:25

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Glenn Colley.....Editor

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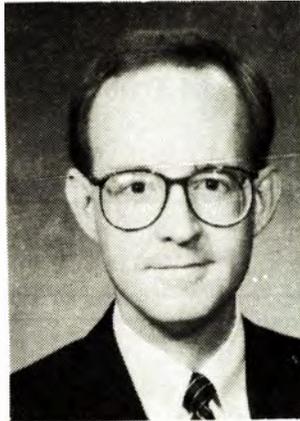
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The Editor's Pen

Glenn Colley

New Editor



Glenn Colley

With prayerful eagerness today I assume the role of editor for the Words of Truth publication. I want to commend all who have edited and written articles for this great periodical over the years, and especially the man with whom I closely labor in the Sixth Avenue church, Joe Spivey. Brother Spivey has done a superior job as editor, and I am happy to call him my friend.

In the January 8, 1971 edition of Words of Truth, the founding editor, Gus Nichols wrote, "We stand committed to the principle that the world's greatest need, and the greatest need of the church, is the need for plain Bible teaching and instruction. This we have preached and taught and emphasized for fifty four years. Our heart has been invested in this work. We believe in it, and have absolutely no confidence in anything else. The only influence in this world for converting sinners, and building up the saints, is "WORDS OF TRUTH" to which we are committed in our paper by that name. If you

believe in this, then we humbly suggest that you subscribe for our paper, and read it weekly. It is a sound paper, having the commendation of some of the greatest preachers and elders and Bible teachers now living. It is not a church "bulletin," but a large, four page weekly religious magazine now in its 8th year. Our regular writers are good and sound gospel preachers, who have stood the test of time and have their feet on the ground. They know what the need of the church for today really is. They are not hired servants, but write simply for their love for the truth, and their wish to see it sown in every human heart and soul. Thank God for them . . ."

I echo brother Nichols' sentiments, and add that I am committed to making the "Words of Truth" the highest quality paper of it's kind. My objective is not to offer a broad diversity of thought concerning doctrinal matters, but rather to ring out a clear message of truth from God's word. I want to offer our subscribers teachings which will point to heaven, exalt the Christ, condemn evil, urge repentance, and lift our spirits to a higher plane of understanding. I humbly ask for your prayers as we work to accomplish this task.

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Can We Know Truth Today?

Glenn Colley

By inspiration James writes, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, 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 5:19-20).

From every nook and cranny of our country now we hear of preachers and elders collapsing to the "New Hermanutic." To follow the leaders of this movement is to forfeit the ability to stand in the pulpit and affirm, "We can and must know and obey the truth," because the root of this Non-hermanutic is the idea that we can't definitively know truth. Beginning with Cain there have been men who have rationalized their way out of obeying God's word. The fruit of this movement shows in Bible classes where learning more about the Bible is not the intent, and sermons which contain almost no study of the Bible. The people will not respect or treasure a law which they are told can't be correctly interpreted anyway.

In the opening text of this article, James teaches directly or by implication these three lessons:

1. WE CAN KNOW TRUTH

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Jesus taught us the answer when He prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth" (John

17:17). If we can't today know definitively what is true, we cannot know with confidence if we are Christians or not, if our sins are truly forgiven, if God is good or evil, or if we can anticipate heaven. In fact, if we can't definitively know truth, then several New Testament passages become absurd. I Peter 1:22 says that our Christian forerunners ". . . Purified their souls in obeying the truth. . .". Jesus said in John 8:32 that folks can know the truth. Ephesians 4:15 encourages Christians to "Speak the truth in love." God has not left us without the ability to correctly discern His truth. We, like Timothy, are to "Study to show thyself approved of God, a worker that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Then, we are to ". . . Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints . . ." (Jude 3).

2. WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING THE TRUTH

James says here that when a person who has strayed from the truth comes back, he has done something that has a clear bearing on his eternity. Truth and salvation are locked together! May every

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Rebuilding The Walls Of Jerusalem And The Restoration Of The Church



W. Gaddys Roy

Israel was led into Canaan by the great conqueror Joshua. After entering the promised land, the only government they had for three hundred years was judges. Samuel was the last judge of Israel. Israel wanted a king to be like the nations around them (I Samuel 8:5, 20-22). Their first three kings were Saul, David, and Solomon. Each of them reigned forty years. After the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided. This divided condition continued for about two hundred fifty-three years, and, because they would not listen to the preaching of the prophets, God allowed the northern ten tribes to be carried into Assyrian captivity (II Kings 17:1-23). After about another two hundred thirty-five years, the kingdom of Judah (southern kingdom) was destroyed, and the people were taken to Babylonia and held in captivity for seventy years. Only the poor were left in the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. When Judah was taken captive, the Chaldeans burned every great house, which included the temple and the king's house, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem (II Kings 25:8-21). When the seventy years of captivity were ended Zerubbabel led a group of about fifty thousand Jews back to Jerusalem. During the time that he was governor the temple was rebuilt. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the walls of the city. He was faced with many hardships and problems in building the walls of Jerusalem. We would not say that the rebuilding of Jerusalem was necessarily a type of the restoration of the church after the dark ages, yet many hardships and circumstances were very similar. For that reason it can be profitable to

study the comparison.

Jerusalem was overthrown, and they lost their city and home land because of sin. Joshua warned Israel that if they transgressed the covenant of the Lord and served other gods, Jehovah's anger would be kindled against them, and they would quickly perish from off the land (Joshua 23:16). Jeremiah begged them to amend their ways and their doings that they might dwell in the land (Jeremiah 7:3, 4). Jeremiah also said, "Thus sayeth Jehovah, stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your souls: but they said, we will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16). Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet. He would plead for Israel to return to God. Instead of their returning to God, they would persecute Jeremiah. It has been said that Jeremiah hardly saw a day of peace in his life as a prophet. As Israel was warned, so was the church warned of apostasy (Acts 20:28-31; I Timothy 4:1-3; II Timothy 4:3, 4).

Jerusalem was restored, and the walls of the city were rebuilt by Nehemiah under the liberty and protection of the king of Persia (Nehemiah 2:5-8). The church was restored after the dark ages under the protection of the United States Constitution, which granted freedom of religion. There were men like Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, and others in Kentucky and West Virginia who began the plea to speak as "the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). Christian Dashar and others in south Georgia, who had no connections with the Campbells and Stone, made the same plea. The same was true of Rocky Springs, near Bridgeport, Alabama. The seed of the kingdom is the word of God (Luke 8:11). When people are free to worship, and not bound by creeds, and will just follow the Bible, it will make Christians of them, as it did in the New Testament (Acts 11:26).

Nehemiah and the Jews were opposed by enemies as they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Their enemies were grieved exceedingly as the walls were being built (Nehemiah 2:10). Their enemies laughed them to scorn and made fun of what Nehemiah and the Jews were doing (Nehemiah 2:19, 20; 4:3). During the early days of the restoration of the church, the denominations were grieved, and they are still grieved today that the church is being restored in name, doctrine, and practice. Nehemiah told their enemies, "Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem" (Nehemiah 2:20). Today, we must assure people that there is no place in Christianity for human names, denominations, or human creeds (John 17:20, 21; I Corinthians 1:10-13; Romans 16:17, 18; Ephesians 4:4-6). The church will always remain pure if it is kept pure from within.

The Jews had faith in God, but that faith had to be put into action. Nehemiah said, "So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half the height thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6). It took hard work and great sacrifices for the pioneer preachers to bring the pure and unadulterated gospel to us and reestablish the church after the dark ages. The Lord has commanded His people to work (Matthew 20:1-16; I Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 2:12). There were some of the Jews who said the work was too great (Nehemiah 4:10). Of course, the church has some who think we cannot build today.

The Jews had opposition from their enemies in building the walls of Jerusalem, just as the pioneers and all Christians will meet opposition in the Christian life (II Timothy 2:12; 3:12). The enemies of the Jews united against them and fought against them (Nehemiah 4:7, 8). Nehemiah and the Jews fought where the opposition was

Continued on page 4

"The Most Of A Minute"

By Glenn Colley

The Beginning Of Knowledge

Want some interesting reading? Take down your Bible and spend some quiet moments reading the book of Proverbs. So many practical day-in-day-out teachings that get right down to where we live. Proverbs 1:7 says, for example, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

The word fear here means that we should have a deep reverence and respect for who and what God is. We stand in awe of His goodness and power. This attitude is, according to Proverbs, the beginning of knowledge. There is no knowledge about life which isn't affected and enhanced by my reverence for God. And sometimes people's views make a complete turn-around when they begin their quest for knowledge with a fear of the Lord. Things like the sacredness of life, the importance of honesty, the need for faith. Ponder with me today, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

Can We Know Truth Today?

Continued from page 2

preacher who fails to feed his listeners a healthy diet of God's word feel the sharp pains of guilt and change his course. The old saying "Ignorance is bliss" doesn't apply here! Let's teach them what they must do to obey His gospel, and be cleansed by His blood (Romans 6:1-6); That the Church of Jesus Christ exists today, and that they must be a part of that body (Ephesians 1:22, 23); What commitment and discipleship mean; and What being a Christian means in our jobs, our homes, our marriages, and all of our relationships (Philippians 2:5).

3. ERRING FROM THE TRUTH WILL COST A MAN HIS SOUL

James 1:18 teaches that we became Christians by

the word of truth. I cannot leave the practice of that truth and remain faithful. I want his mercy. I must follow His truth. For you see, "Mercy and truth are 'met' together" (Psalms 85:10). James makes this point clear: ". . . he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death. . . ." (5:20). Some say that in our outreach we should try to "meet peoples needs," and not teach them about obedience and Christ's church. They are wrong. Naturally, if we are Christ's, we will be concerned with problems as we encounter them. However, people's greatest need came as a result of sin, and will be met only through hearing and obeying the truth.

Proverbs 23:23 -- "Buy the truth, and sell it not."

Rebuilding The Walls Of Jerusalem And The Restoration Of The Church

Continued From Page 3

(Nehemiah 4:20). Denominations often unite and work against our meetings and other efforts. The church must be militant and meet the opposition wherever the truth of God is attacked. In the past there were many debates on baptism, and we preached much on baptism because that was where the walls of the truth were attacked. The enemies of the Jews first made fun of the work, and when that did not stop the Jews from building, the enemies decided to fight (Nehemiah 2:19; 4:3, 11-14). The denominations first made fun of the church as it was being restored by such men as Stone, the Campbells and others. Then the denominations decided to debate, but the sword of the Spirit was used, and used effectively (Ephesians 6:17; II Timothy 2:3; Hebrews 4:12; Jude 3; Proverbs 25:9).

Nehemiah exhorted the Jews to do their best

because of the reproach of their enemies (Nehemiah 5:9). Everyone in the church should do his best because of the reproach of the enemy. All Christians have the responsibility of working and letting their light shine (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 2:12-15).

When the Jews' enemies saw that the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, they wanted Nehemiah to meet them "in one of the villages in the plain of Ono" (Nehemiah 6:1-4). They wanted to do Nehemiah mischief. Nehemiah knew there could be no compromise in the work of the Lord. There can be no compromise with the denominations in the work of the Lord today (II Corinthians 6:14). Denominations sometimes want us to have union meetings with them, but we should always be as Nehemiah and say, "I am doing a great work, so I

cannot come down" (Nehemiah 6:3). Let all denominations give up their human creeds and come to the Bible, and we will have unity. Yet, I must confess that compromise is likely the greatest threat to the church of our Lord today.

Nehemiah and the Jews restored Jerusalem with its walls and practiced that which had been left when Judah was carried into Babylonian captivity. The church has returned to the ancient order and practice from which it had fallen (II Thessalonians 2:3; Jude 3). Let all preach the word without compromise and turn neither to the right nor the left, so that history will not repeat itself.

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Pray Without Ceasing



Dalton Key

We wear ourselves weary with worry, we line our stomachs with stress-caused ulcers, we send ourselves to an early, fretful grave because we have lost sight of the purpose and power of prayer. "Casting all your care open him, for he careth for you" is still a statement of truth (I Peter 5:7). Convinced that God is, that he is powerful, and that he cares for us, we must return to the avenue of prayer, taking the wonderful example of the Bible's prayerful characters to

heart. We must learn to heed Paul's admonition to "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). Observe the history of the ages! Great men of God have always been great men of prayer. Isaac prayed in a field (Genesis 24:63); Jacob, by a brook (Genesis 3:22-24); Jeremiah, from a dungeon (Lamentations 3:55); Daniel from a den of lions (Daniel 6); Jonah, from a fish's belly (Jonah 2:1); Peter, on a housetop (Acts 10:9); and the record shows that the apostle Paul, a mighty man of prayer, petitioned God from a prison cell on more than one occasion.

And what of our Savior? Was he not, while in the flesh, a man of prayer? Did he not spend many long hours, yea, entire sleepless nights, engrossed in earnest supplication? So impressed were his disciples by our Lord's prayer life, that on one

occasion, when he had finished prayer, one of his followers asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1). His prayer recorded in John's seventeenth chapter, the prayer which should rightly be termed "the Lord's Prayer," reveals the depth and riches of his prayer life.

These all, "of whom the world was not worthy," along with countless others not here mentioned, recognized and realized an important biblical principle which many of us have foolishly, faithlessly laid aside. These all believed -- firmly -- believed -- that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

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Maybe among the nobles it centered around new statues and sculptures. Surely they would have noticed clean feet. For those were a commodity among the civilized of the "sandle clad, un-paved street walking" people.

The air was thick with tension. A deal was to be made (Matthew 26:15). The Master had already made it clear that he needed to be on with his mission (John 13:27). The fine robbed (Luke 20:46), praise honoring (Matthew 6:1-16) Pharisees and chief priests were to the point of stopping at nothing to silence He who with simple devotion had shamed them (John 12:10-11, Luke 22:2, John 5:18, 7:1). Now this insider of the

"sect" was coming to help them silence him.

He was just a lowly disciple, but he had clean feet. Clean feet belonged to the honored" (Luke 7:44-ff, John 12:3). How ironic for such a man. It must have been a nervous moment . . . the disciple, tumcoat, betraying his master.

I wonder what they said as they exchanged money for information. As they cut their deal, God nearby with a tear for all mankind, Satan listening in with a sinister snicker. I guess it was just small talk, nervous small talk.

"Nice weather we've been having for an April."

"Fine horse there, Habeb."

"Judas, who washed your feet?"

"Small Talk"

Dale Jenkins

You know small talk:

"Nice weather we've been having lately."

"Hot enough for you?"

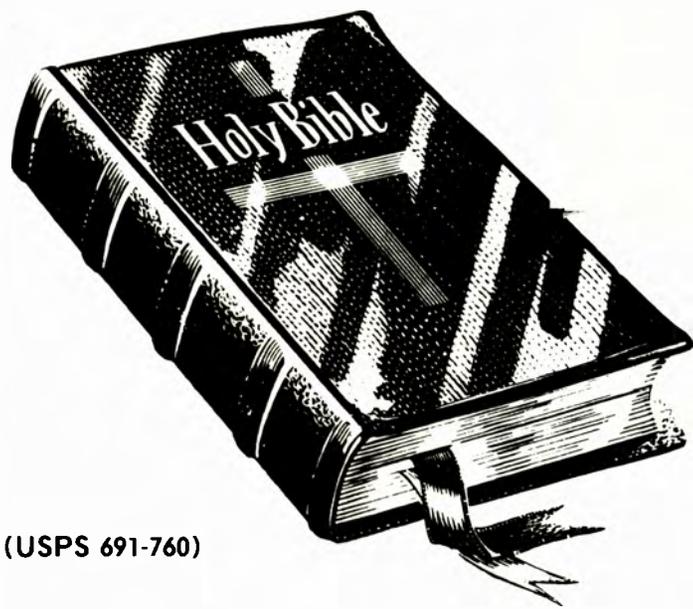
"Boy, I've been busy lately."

"How's the family?"

"Nice hair cut."

I guess there's a million of them; and every culture has them -- small talk phrases. And the culture mediates what the talk envelops around. For instance, I can't see someone in ancient Egypt complimenting a friend's new stereo system, or some Southerner commenting on a neighbor's neat new chariot.

I wonder what the small talk of Jerusalem was?



(USPS 691-760)

Words Of Truth

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

the

26:25

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"A Fundamental, A Force Called . . . Love" #1



Dan Winkler

"Simon, son of John, lovest [agapas] thou me . . . yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love [philo] thee" (John 21:15f). Note the differing words translated "love." Peter was asked if he truly loved [agape] Jesus. In response, he used a term for domestic love

[philo], as if to say, "Lord, I love you like a brother!"

Indeed, love is a deep feeling of the heart (I Peter 1:22). But it's more. It is one of the most fundamental principles of Christianity. In this study, let's consider five passages which prove to us how important and basic love is to our Christian lives.

I. Love Identifies Us With Jesus And His Family (John 13:34, 35)

(1) "... a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another." - This is the only time in the gospel of John that we read of Jesus using the term "new," which underscores the importance of this commandment to love each other.

(2) "... that ye love one another: even as I have loved you." - Note: this command was not new in "substance." The law of Moses taught, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18). In fact, this was one of the commandments upon which the whole law and prophets were placed (Matthew 22:37-40). Rather, this commandment of Jesus was new in two ways. First, it was new in "subject." We are to love each other and not just our neighbor in general. Second, this commandment was new in "standard." We are to love each other in keeping with the example of Jesus' love, not in keeping with the ways we love ourselves.

(3) "... by this shall all men know that you are

my disciples." - Love is a badge of our discipleship! Others should easily acquaint us with Jesus and with one another by the love we share. In fact, it is impossible to enjoy an intimate knowledge of God without obeying this command (I John 4:7, 8). THAT MAKES LOVE PRETTY BASIC!

II. Love Is The Sum And Substance Of Our Lifestyle (I Corinthians 12:31 - 13:8)

(1) "... a most excellent way show I unto you." - The term translated "way" carries the idea of a road down which one travels, a walk, a lifestyle (cf. Ephesians 4:1)

(2) "... if I . . . but have not love. . . I am . . ." - In the opening verses of I Corinthians 13, Paul compared love to the "charisma" [the miraculous gifts of first century times] (vs. 1, 2); to acts of "charity," such as selling all of one's property to feed the indigent (v. 2); and to acts of "conviction," such as martyrdom (v. 3). Yet, without love, anything we say is not worth saying, anything we have is not worth having, and anything we do is not worth doing!

(3) "... love . . . is . . ." - Paul defines love by what it does (I Corinthians 13:4-8). It helps me get along with others, because love "suffereth long and is kind." It helps me live in harmony with myself, because love "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." It helps me be a better person, a gentleman/lady, because love "doth not behave itself unseemly." It helps me control my feelings, because love "seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil." It helps me be a stronger Christian, because love "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." Too, love helps me learn how to feel for others in that it "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things." Is it any wonder we are taught as individuals to "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2)? Every facet of our lifestyle is to bear the mark of affection. THAT MAKES LOVE PRETTY BASIC!

III. Love Is At The Heart Of That Wonderful Thing Called Grace (Ephesians 2:4-8)

(1) "... ye were dead through your trespasses . . . sons of disobedience. . . doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind." - Dead, disobedience, and desires. These three words sum up man's dilemma. God's answer? Grace! But what makes for the grace of God!

(2) "... God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us . . . made us alive together with Christ. . . that in ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness." - Do you see those three words? Mercy, love, and kindness? These are the three elements that constitute the grace of God. Note also the superlatives: a treasure chest of *mercy*; a tremendous *love*; and a *kindness* that transcends one generation after another! Such is grace. And at the heart of grace is the virtue of our study, love.

(3) "... by grace have you been saved through faith." - The term "saved" is translated from a word in the perfect tense, which conveys the idea of past action with continuing results. Thus, God has done something in the past which has continued results in behalf of man's salvation. What? Jesus! Why? Grace! But love is at the heart of God's grace. THAT MAKES LOVE PRETTY BASIC!

IV. Love Is The Silver Thread That Holds Together The Tender Virtues Of Our Lives As Christians

(Colossians 3:12-14)

(1) "... put on therefore, as God's elect . . . a heart of . . ." - The King James version uses the term "bowels" instead of "heart" because ancients thought of the bowels as the seedbed of tender virtue. And note those virtues that are to characterize our lives: Compassion (Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36); kindness (Ephesians 4:32; cf. Proverbs

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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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Glenn Colley.....Editor

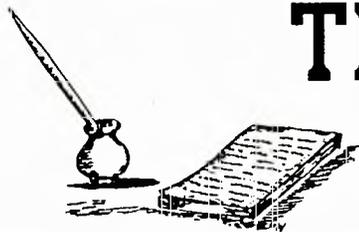
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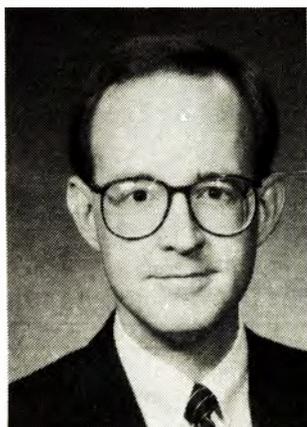
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The Editor's Pen

Glenn Colley

About An Election And Abortion



Glenn Colley

Most Christians know how critical the question of Abortion is in the upcoming presidential election. One candidate is strongly supportive of abortion rights, the other is opposed to abortion, and is "pro-life."

American women are currently aborting 1.6

million children each year, making the womb the most dangerous place for a child to be in the United States. The other issues and arguments and policies in the election rhetoric, pale beside this one. During a four-year term, unless abortion is outlawed, over 6 million children will not see the light of day. Suppose we get a president who leads us too quickly into war. Thousands may tragically die on the battlefield, but probably not 6 million. Or, suppose we get a president who is not interested in the environment? Some species of animals may become extinct, and the countryside be marred in some places. But if abortion continues as it is, over 6 million during his term will die. Or, suppose we elect a man who has an inept policy on economics. Interest rates could soar, and the deficit could continue to rise. But if he fails to reverse pro-choice laws, we can speak with great certainty that over 6 million children will die.

It's interesting that in Luke 1:41 we read, "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the BABE leaped in her womb." The Greek word for BABE here is

"Brepheos." Then, in Luke 2:12 we read, "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the BABE wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (emphasis mine, GC) Consider the fact that the Greek word for this already-born child is ALSO "Brepheos." No difference. The Holy Spirit uses the same word for a baby, whether in the womb or out!

Given the fact that the unborn is alive, (The heart almost always begins beating before the woman knows she is pregnant) is human, (Certainly not animal) and is innocent, (No one has less guilt) then deciding to abort that baby is to take an innocent human life. That's murder.

Our future and this question are tied-together more than folks realize. A Christian brother (Pro-life) who is in medical school recently said to me, "Glenn, the medical profession is through discussing whether abortion is right or wrong. We're spending that time discussing the next step which is euthanasia." Have you ever considered that most of the arguments people offer in favor of the "Pro-choice" position can be made with equal weight in favor of killing our elderly? (i.e. "Financial burden," "Low-quality of life," "Physically/mentally handicapped," "Not a good time in my life to care for another," etc.)

When Paul listed the works of the flesh he included murder (Galatians 5:19-21), and then said that "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We must be teaching from our pulpits and classrooms and kitchen tables the truth about abortion and those who perform abortions. It is my conviction that our Savior, who loved to surround Himself with children, will be pleased. How could He possibly be otherwise?

Victory Over Sin



Johnny Ramsey

We know that children of God can be successful in their battle with temptation and sin for several reasons. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape" (I Corinthians 10:13). Christ left us an

example, "that we should follow in his steps" (I Peter 2:22). We have the help of Christ, and, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). Even persecuted saints in the first century overcame the devil (Revelation 12:11), as we are exhorted: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Christ was "delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25) and we have access to His shed blood which cleanses us when we do sin (I John 1:7; 2:1-2).

However, as thrilling as all these points are, they are of little comfort to the member of the church who flippantly deals with the world and flirts with the subtle cunning of Satan (II Corinthians 2:11). We must cooperate with the Lord's provisions and show our gratitude by manifesting a closer walk with God, as Paul mentioned in I Corinthians 9:27, "I buffet my body and bring it under subjection . . . lest I become a castaway."

One of the most exciting ways and practical observations in triumphing over evil is to let the Bible show us how various characters in Scripture remained pure and holy. Notice how and why the following ones gained their victory over temptation, sin and death (Romans 5:12; 6:23; 8:1-2).

Joseph (Genesis 39) was able to resist the

temptation of Potiphar's wife because of his relationship with his Maker: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (v. 9).

Joshua (Joshua 24) because of family responsibilities refused to compromise with ungodliness: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (v. 15).

Daniel (Daniel 1:8) because dedication and personal purity were vital to him "would not defile himself with the king's meat, nor with wine which he drank."

Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:9) remained true to God, because the proclamation of heaven's message was too important to quit: "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

Paul (Romans 8:18), in spite of all he suffered for the cause of Christ, could say, "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."

Stephen (Acts 7) put his life on the line for the Lord who had died for him. As Peter so nobly stated in John 6:68, "To whom shall we go? Thou has the words of eternal life."

How did Jesus gain victory over temptation and sin (Hebrews 4:15)? It was because the word of God was deep in His Heart (Psalm 119:11) and the devil fled in defeat when the Redeemer quoted the Bible to him (Matthew 4:4-10). Let us therefore do as Ezra did: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). When the word of the Lord is precious to us (I Samuel 3:1) as the apple of our eye (Proverbs 7:2), we shall keep His commandments and live. And the demons in Hell with tremble! The icing on the cake is found in I John 5:4, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

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The Wisdom Of Soul Winning



Vance Hutton

In Proverbs 11:30, Solomon stated by inspiration that the one who would win souls is wise. Daniel spoke of those that turn many to righteousness as shining as the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:3). Why could we conclude that the soul winner is wise? Could the same be said of

those living today under the new covenant? Notice some of the reasons that the soul winner is a wise individual.

A) BECAUSE OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD'S COMMAND IS ALWAYS WISE: We are commanded by Him who has all authority to seek to save souls. Mark 16:15 commands us to carry the gospel to others. II Timothy 2:2 commands us to teach others. Jesus said a wise person seeks to obey the Lord's commands (Matthew 7:24-27). The foolish man fails to obey.

B) BECAUSE OF THE VALUE OF THE SOUL: In soul winning we are working with the things of the most value. The souls of men are so precious that Jesus died for them (Titus 2:14). Jesus spoke of their value in Matthew 16:26 and stated their value as more than the whole world. Matthew 13:45 compares them to goodly pearls. Souls are precious and to win them is wisdom demonstrated.

C) BECAUSE WINNING THE SOUL PREPARES IT FOR HEAVEN: Souls are not prepared for eternity until they are won to the Lord. A person must be brought to obeying the gospel and being made free from his sin to begin the route to heaven (Romans 6:17-18). Heaven is a wonderful place to be sought. Heaven should become one of our greatest motivations to pursue the Christian course. It prepares the person won to begin his march toward heaven and it also prepares the soul winner because he must make efforts to be

pleasing to God.

D) BECAUSE SOUL WINNING SHOWS COMPASSION FOR OTHERS: The greatest thing that could possibly be done for another is to bring his soul to salvation. We are taught to love others and to care for others. Surely we care about the welfare of the most precious thing relating to them. Let us show compassion toward others by helping them in the greatest need they have (Colossians 3:12-13).

E) BECAUSE SOUL WINNING REVEALS UNSELFISHNESS: We should want to share with others what has been done for us. Jesus was so unselfish. Let us follow His steps and serve others and make efforts to share Jesus and ourselves with them. It too will reveal a mark of wisdom.

F) BECAUSE SOUL WINNING MAKES BETTER LIVES, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES: Lives will be changed for the better. Improvement can only come as people are led by the Bible. Better parents and children will result. Divorce will decrease. Turmoil and strife will decline. People will see such evil to be contrary to the gospel and the good life (I Timothy 1:9-11).

G) BECAUSE SOUL WINNING SAVES FOLKS FROM DEATH: Alien sinners and erring Christians are without hope (Ephesians 2:12; James 5:19-20). They are doomed to be separated from God eternally unless they are won to Christ.

Let us all make efforts to win souls, because it is still true that the soul winner is wise.

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The Second Creation



Elwood Holt

My New Testament carries these business-like words: 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Hell is not a figment of some person's ambitious imagination -- it is the stern reality of prepared punishment.

And thus, today, the problem of sin remains as the most vexing and destructive problem known to man. And only God himself has the answer to that problem in the Blood of His precious Son. Jude, writing in his little letter, declares that the godless forces of the world are seeking to gain two major objectives, First, godless men are turning the mercy of God into excuse for immorality. And, second, the unrighteous of the world are denying the Lord Jesus Christ. Manifestly, the task of the Church in any age is to put sin out of business, and to uphold

the Christ. And this is done by simply preaching the Gospel of redemption. We have no other

"Most Of A Minute"

By Glenn Colley

A question which has been asked over and over again in the last couple of weeks is, "What is truth?" This obviously isn't a new question for people to ask. In fact, 2000 years ago, a man named Pilate, a Roman governor, asked Jesus that same question, "what is truth?" You see, Jesus had just affirmed that "everyone that is of the truth would hear him" (John 18:37).

Jesus answered the question for us, and I'm glad He did. What He said is the basis for the faith of every Christian living today. Jesus said as He prayed to the Almighty God, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy WORD is truth." The books and ideas of men will come and go, but the people will still come back again and again to the word of God -- when they are ready to hear the truth.

"A Fundamental, A Force Called . . . Love" #1

Continued From Page 1

19:22); lowliness (James 4:10; I Peter 5:5, 6); meekness (II Timothy 2:24, 25; Titus 3:2); patience (I Corinthians 13:4; I Thessalonians 5:14); and forgiveness (Matthew 6:12-15; Ephesians 4:32).

(2) "... above all these things put on love ..." - In addition to putting on the wardrobe of the wonderful traits previously mentioned, we are to adorn the overcoat of love to protect our heart from the storms of life and the frigid bitterness of those in the world.

(3) "... love, which is the bond of perfectness ..." - The word translated "bond" carries the idea of that which binds like the ligaments of a body. Thus, love is presented as a bond, a thread which ties all of these virtues together and joins them to our character. As a result, if love wanes or weakens, other virtues will

suffer. THAT MAKES LOVE PRETTY BASIC!

V. Love Is The Seed Of Life

(1) "... this is love ..." - The apostle John used the word *agapao*, fifty-nine times [twenty-eight in I John alone]; the word *agape*, twenty-eight times [eighteen in I John]; the word *agapetos*, nine times [five in I John, four in III John]; and the word *phileo*, thirteen times [all in the gospel of John]. He is thus called the "apostle of love," using these words for love so frequently. Here is a man who knows something about love and he specifically identifies it in the passage currently under study.

(2) "... that we keep his commandments ..." - His what? His law/will. Note: the term translated "keep" carries the idea of continued obedience. Therefore, to truly love God is to continually do what he says.

(3) "... and his commandments are not

grievous ..." - The will of God is not oppressive. His commands are not viewed as some aggressive power, restrictive and intimidating. There is still a "yoke" for the Christian to wear and a "burden" for the Christian to bear (Matthew 11:28-30). But such is gladly accepted when a love for God reigns in the heart. THAT MAKES LOVE PRETTY BASIC!

Conclusion

It bears repeating. When Jesus was asked to identify the greatest of all commandments he replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). Without a doubt, love is a basic, a fundamental of Christianity!

The Church In Prophecy, Preparatory Stage And Complete Existence

Kenneth McClain

The prophet Daniel states, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44). Daniel also speaks of the kingdom that our Lord was to establish when He came to earth the first time. In Matthew 16:18, 19 Jesus identified the kingdom as the church. In Colossians 1:18 Paul says that the church is the body and that Christ is the head of the body, the church. Therefore, we can refer to the kingdom as the church and body of Christ.

The Church In Prophecy

Isaiah also spoke of the church in prophecy. In Isaiah 2:2-4 we read, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah is saying that the church will come in the last days and will be established in the city of Jerusalem.

Question: What is "the last days?" The Hebrew writer described the last days as the Christian dispensation (Hebrews 1:1, 2). The church came into existence on the day of Pentecost and will remain until the end of time (Acts 2). The last days began not in the Old Testament dispensation, but in the New Testament (Hebrews 8:13; 10:11). Isaiah as well as Zechariah, prophesied that the establishment of the church would take place in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2, 3; 28:16; Zechariah 1:16). Isaiah 2:2 says that all nations shall flow unto the church. This is in accord with Jesus' command to preach the gospel to all the world (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). However, the preaching of the gospel would not begin until Pentecost, 33 A.D. (Matthew 19:5, 6). In Colossians 1:23 we are told that the gospel has been preached to every creature under heaven. This is fulfilling prophecy.

The Church In Preparation

Inspired men spoke of the church in the preparatory stage. In Matthew 3:1, 2, John the Baptizer spoke of the church as being "at hand." In Mark 9:1, Jesus spoke of the church in the preparatory stage when he said that "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." In Matthew 10:7 the apostles were commanded to preach "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Luke 10:9 tells us that the 70 were to say that "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," Joseph of Arimathea and the thief on the cross realized that the church, the kingdom, was to come. If anyone belongs to a church that came into existence before Pentecost or after

Pentecost, he does not belong to the Lord's church.

The Church In Existence

The Lord's church came into existence on the day of Pentecost when sinners heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ. Peter stood up and proclaimed the Lord's death, burial and ascension, and those that were pricked in their hearts obeyed the gospel and were added to the church (Acts 2:22-47). After Pentecost the church was no longer spoken of as in prophecy or preparation, but as in existence. The church of our Lord exists in all parts of the world where the pure and unadulterated gospel is preached and obeyed. The Lord's church will stand forever (Daniel 2:44).

What Must One Do To Be A Member Of The Lord's Church?

The Bible describes the church as a group of obedient believers who have been called out of the world by the gospel. Members of the church must remain faithful and true as long as they live. Those who become members of the church must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17); believe the gospel (Mark 16:16); repent of sins (Luke 13:3); confess the name of Christ (Acts 8:37); and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Why not become a member of the true church that we read about in God's holy book, the Bible? Remember, the Bible teaches that the Lord is coming back the second time for His own and His own are members of the church.

--2842 Shelby St., Indianapolis, IN 46203.

The Second Creation

Continued From Page 3

purpose than this, and the urgency of the hour demands immediate action!

And personally, I have no time to argue about the faith that is in Jesus Christ. The task is simply to speak the word, as God has given it, and the recipient must then assume the responsibility for his action with reference to it. For example, Paul Revere in his midnight ride did not stop to argue with the neighbors. He simply bore his witness. As he rode, he shouted his warning, and the people could do with the fact as they would. When the sun rides the spring days, you do not have to go out with an almanac to convince the farmer that spring is here. Every blade of grass, every flower that blooms is witness to the new life abroad in the earth! Our task today is to simply deliver the message that a world in sin can find the way out through Jesus Christ, and in obedience to His Gospel. And men need to be recreated by the Gospel today, for men are dying without the Christ.

Christian people are waging a mighty battle

against the sin and evil of all sorts in this world. It is a life and death battle. No one can take a negative stand in this great struggle and receive a crown in the end. But every one WHO ROLLS UP HIS SLEEVES and gets into the thick of the fight and stays there until his last round -- either his home going -- or the Lord's coming -- shall receive a crown from the Lord Himself. Remember that Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; he that gathereth not with me scattereth." So one is either for Christ or against Christ.

If for Christ, remember he that hath put his hand to the plough and then looketh back is unworthy of the kingdom of heaven. And all who have not turned unto the Lord, who are trying to stand on neutral ground, just remember there is no such ground. Christ and His church and heaven, or hell.

This too is the word of God -- John said: "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Friends, it is not pleasant to live in darkness -- when the

current goes off telephones begin ringing inquiring the trouble and asking how long we will have to wait. But the Lord is crying out asking why will you perish -- come unto me and be saved. He is begging us to leave the darkness and to walk in the light of His word. Asking us to enter the narrow gate and travel the straight way that leads to eternal life.

To all who have entered in he calls out to them to let their light shine on their good works that others seeking them will glorify God. So we who have received the light, should walk in the light, doing that others may be encouraged. What a privilege, and what a happy life.

Are you serving Jesus faithfully? Are you looking for His return? Are you serious about this matter? Don't let the devil cheat you out of your crown. Search the scriptures for yourself -- you will be amazed at the simplicity of God's word. . . Be wise, be a Christian.

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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus
Words of Truth and soberness."

with the
Acts 26:25

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"A Fundamental, A Force Called . . . Love #2



Dan Winkler

In previous study, we saw how fundamental love is to Christianity. First, it identifies us with Jesus and his family (John 13:34, 35). Second, it is to be the sum and substance of our lifestyle (I Corinthians 12:31 - 13:8). Third, it is at the heart of that wonderful thing called grace

(Ephesians 2:4-8). Fourth, it is the silver thread that holds together the virtues of our lives (Colossians 3:12-14). And fifth, it is the seed of life that produces obedience (I John 5:3).

In this study, let's consider five passages which point to love as a driving force behind much of what we are/do.

I. Love Irons Out The Rough Edges Of My Character And Rounds Off The Barbs Of My Convictions

(I Corinthians 16:13, 14)

(1) "watch . . . stand . . . quit . . . be strong . . . let . . ." -- This passage entails five imperatives, commands, in teaching us to be a people of conviction.

(2) "all that you do . . ." -- In the face of our convictions, everything we do is to be done within a specified perimeter. What perimeter? Read on.

(3) "in love . . ." -- NOTE: all things are to be done "in" the sphere of love, not just "by" the agency of love or accompanied "with" the virtue of love. Love is the boundary, the fortifying wall that encircles everything we do from a heart of conviction. LOVE MOTIVATES!

II. Love Motivates Us To Undertake Things That Are Difficult

(II Corinthians 2:4)

(1) "for out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears . . ." -- Paul used three words to describe the deep feelings

he had in writing I Corinthians: affliction, anguish, and tears. Was his heart in the project? Who would dare say otherwise!

(2) "I wrote unto you . . ." -- In the background of this passage, is Paul's rebuke in I Corinthians of the man living in incest [study II Corinthians 2:5-8 and II Corinthians 7:8-11 in connection with I Corinthians 5]. With conviction he corrected this immorality but, his words were buffered by the compassion of his tears.

(3) "that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you . . ." -- Why did he undertake such a difficult task of correction? It was proof of his love. LOVE MOTIVATES!

III. Love Ignites

My Spirit Of Generosity

(II Corinthians 8:1-5, 7, 8, 24)

(1) "abound in this grace also . . ." -- In his context, Paul used the term "grace" as a synonym for giving. Why? Grace consists of mercy, love, and kindness (cf. Ephesians 2:4-8) and that's how we need to feel when we give. (2) "I speak not by way of commandment . . ." -- In directing his brethren to give, Paul did not exercise apostolical authority and command a certain percentage. Rather, he directed his readers attention to the poverty-stricken Macedonians who gave with joy, zeal, and commitment. Their's was an example to follow.

(3) "proving . . . the sincerity of your love . . ." -- The term "proving" in this verse carries the idea of an exam. Every time a Christian gives to the Lord, he is taking a test, a test of love. Why? LOVE MOTIVATES!

IV. Love Energizes Our Faith

(Galatians 5:6, 13, 14)

(1) "in Christ . . ." -- These are two of Paul's favorite words in describing the New Testament Church (cf. I Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:22, 23; II Timothy 2:10).

(2) "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision . . ." -- The term

"circumcision" in this passage has reference to one's Jewish ancestry. In contrast, "uncircumcision" alludes to one's non-Jewish ancestry. Paul assured his readers that their relationship to God did not depend on their physical heritage. So what counts with God?

(3) "faith working through love . . ." -- "Faith" without love genders heartless ritualism. In converse, "love" without a governing faith genders a base lawlessness under the guise of emotion. In the balance, both faith and love are equally essential to our relationship with God in the Church. Faith keeps my love in check and love keeps my faith involved in the lives of people for God's glory. Again, LOVE MOTIVATES!

V. Love Creates A Spirit Of Harmony Among Me And My Spiritual Family

(Philippians 2:1-8)

(1) "if there is . . . any fellowship . . ." -- One of the basic threats facing the church at Philippi was division, as implied by the multitude of times Paul emphasized Christian "fellowship" in the epistle (Philippians 1:5, 6; 2:1, 25; 3:10; 4:3 [twice], 14, 15).

(2) "if there is thereof any exhortation in Christ . . . consolation of love . . . tender mercies and compassions . . ." -- According to this passage, four things promote unity among Christians and solidify the fellowship they enjoy. First, there is the exhortation of Christ; that is, the fact that Christ may be called to help me and all others who are my brethren (cf. Hebrews 2:18; 9:24). Second, there is the consolation or the persuasion that flows from love. Like the smooth flowing words of an eloquent orator, love prods, persuades, and motivates (cf. II Corinthians 5:14). Third, there is my association with the Holy Spirit. What a joy to know that I and my fellow-brethren not only hold hands with each other but with the Holy Spirit; that is, we all enjoy fellowship with the Spirit in that he dwells within our hearts and

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Glenn Colley Editor

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The Lord's Work

Dale Jenkins

This morning. This morning Andrew, our five year old, stumbled in our bedroom early. We jostled him up into bed with us. You may have to be a parent to understand this, but he's fun to have in bed. We put him in between us and he snuggled up close. So warm . . . our child.

I had a sermon to prepare, a hospital to be visited, a funeral to preach, visits to make, a book I needed to finish and a mission trip to get ready for. There were classes to prepare for and studies to conduct. Eternal things. Had to hurry on. As I got up, Andrew said, "Stay here." All that other stuff, as important as it was would have to wait. My little bit of heaven on earth was right in front of me. In a couple of days he would begin kindergarten and in a couple more he'll be off to college. What is the Lord's work? Indeed: It is messages to others from God's Word, it is trips to far off lands to tell others of His love. No doubt; it is "ministering" to those who are sick. But to a father the Lord's work is first his own children. God as a father (So described over 100 times in the scriptures) sets the example of "adult" concern for all mankind, but, more, He sets the example of giving the best to His children. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:11). Perhaps nothing was more eternal I did today than those few minutes with my child. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Psalm 103:13). "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. . . ." (Galatians 6-7a).

I wonder: Are you doing the Lord's work? Are you taking time to be with your children? When

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The Editor's Pen

Glenn Colley

The Bible Vs. Mormon



Glenn Colley

I understand the confused, bewildered feeling many Christians get while studying with the Mormons. This cult craftily portrays itself as wholesome and good and hides many realities of its belief. For example, if you believe the Bible is verbally inspired, that we have God's word today in the Bible, and that the Bible is complete (II Timothy 3:16), then they, according to the Book of Mormon, consider you a fool.

I suggest that when studying with the Mormons you work to focus the discussion on an important Bible teaching. They will agree that the Bible is "one of God's books," so based on the Bible, you can compare clear Bible truths with their so-called "standard works." To assist you, let me offer these contradictions between God's word and the Mormon's word:

1. The church of Christ was built AD 33 according to the Bible (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2; Acts 20:28).

--According to Mosiah 18:17, Book of Mormon, the church of Christ was built around 147 BC.

2. The disciples of Christ were called Christians FIRST in Antioch (Acts 11:26) about 45AD.

The Real McCoy

Glenn Colley

You've heard the phrase, "the real McCoy." Do you know where it started?

Norman Shelby was a boxer, and he was good. In 1890 he left the farm in Indiana to pursue a career in boxing. In 1891 he emerged as "Kid McCoy." He was a powerhouse, and he knew it. He said he'd fight anyone, anywhere. For years he averaged a fight a month, winning most by knock-outs.

Almost overnight, imitation Kid McCoys began cropping up. That, however, was put to a stop on March 24, 1899. The Kid, in what was called "a titanic slugfest" finished off the legendary Joe Choyaski in the twentieth round. The San Francisco Examiner's boxing writer proclaimed, "NOW YOU'VE SEEN THE REAL McCOY!"

There are many areas of our lives in which nothing but the genuine article will do. The most important of these is clearly our religion. When the Bible reads, that there is only "one body" (Ephesians 4:4), it's speaking of the church. That's right, only one! (Ephesians 1:22-23). How will I know that I have the "real McCoy"? There is only

--According to the Book of Mormon, the disciples were called Christians first in 73BC (Alma 46:13-14).

3. The Lord's supper is to consist of fruit of the vine and unleavened bread (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

--According to the Book of Mormon, the Lord's supper today should consist of WATER and unleavened bread (Doctrine and Covenants 27).

4. Elders/bishops are to meet qualifications which include being "the husband of one wife . . . one that ruleth his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Timothy 3:1-7).

--According to Mormon teaching and practice, an unmarried man without a wife or children will do fine. I have always refused to refer to one of these false teachers as "Elder _____".

5. A prophet who speaks in the name of the Lord, whose prophecies do not come true as he has said, is a false prophet (Deuteronomy 18:20-22; I John 4:1).

--According to Mormon teaching, the "New Jerusalem and temple" would be built at Independence, MO, in Joseph Smith's generation (Doctrines and Covenants 84:2-5; 57:1-3; 101:17, 20, 70-74. No temple stands at Independence today, nor has it ever.

May we always be people who study God's truths and are ready to teach that truth in love.

one way. Second Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved of God . . ."

Let's ask some serious questions about the church of which we are members.

1. Does it believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God and the text of authority for our lives? II Timothy 3:16.

2. Does it pattern its worship after that in the New Testament? John 4:24.

3. Does it teach the truth in regard to what an alien sinner must do to be saved? I Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16.

4. Does it bear a scriptural name, and do its members wear the name "Christian"? Acts 4:12.

5. Does it have a scriptural organization (i.e. elders, deacons, evangelists, etc.)? I Timothy 3:1-13.

This brief "checklist" is by no means exhaustive, but will hopefully serve to demonstrate the need for careful examination of our religion and practices. May we ever maintain our thirst for restored New Testament Christianity.

The Value Of True Shepherds



R. W. Gray

God has given various designations to those ordained to oversee the local congregations. Each designation underscores an important area of work they are to perform. On more than one occasion they are described as "pastors," that is, shepherds (Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 5:1-5).

The great shepherd (poimen) of the sheep is Christ who is head over all things to the church (Hebrews 13:20; Colossians 1:18; I Peter 5:1-4). These shepherds, sometimes referred to as elders, are to feed (tend) the flock of God which is among them (I Peter 5:1-2 NKJV). To do less is to void the "pattern" for the organization of the church.

The threat of grievous wolves whose aim it would be to devour the flock was the basis of Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28-29). Leadership, example, admonition, encouragement, and teaching are all a part of the role filled by these brethren. But, as in the verses cited, they are to guard, protect, and defend God's people against all predators. Lack of care for the sheep will cause untrue shepherds to flee when the wolves appear (John 10:12-13).

Studying this vital theme one is soon aware that the role of elders involves far more than a weekly meeting and the hiring and firing of preachers. We need near the end of another Century, as in no previous time, men who have the knowledge, love, patience, and care to serve as faithful shepherds. Management skills, when scripturally applied, are an asset to elders. But the one quality most needed

The Lord's Work

Continued From Page 2

the grand book of life closes, you won't count your silver and gold, you won't add up the medals and certificates -- but if you are a parent, you'll count your children's love. Isn't it ironic how "the Lord's work" and a parent's work run so close together?

Today, I'll do many things, but none will be as important as the few minutes I spent with my son . . . doing the Lord's work. Did you spend time with your Father today?

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now is the pastor who knows, loves, and guards the sheep.

True shepherds not only protect against wolves, but they provide solace when a sheep is wounded, frightened, lonely, or sick. The true shepherd takes note of each one under his oversight, carefully noting their progress, or lack of it, in the faith. If spiritual medication is indicated he will see that it is administered.

Beyond protection, solace, and medication, the sheep must have food and exercise. It is again the role of the shepherd who is to be "apt to teach" (Titus 1:9; I Timothy 3:2b). It is not enough simply to assume that truth is being taught in all classes in a local setting. It is not enough to trust the local preacher to do all the in-depth study needed to feed the sheep. Preachers have an important role, but they cannot scripturally do the pastoring. Teachers, preachers, class room materials, sermon content, and balance will be carefully studied by true shepherds. How awesome their responsibilities. How serious their task. And how thankful for true shepherds we should be.

True shepherds do not drive sheep. They lead them. True shepherds do not flex their muscles, threaten or cajole, but they encourage and admonish. True shepherds remember the words of Jesus who said, "and ye are all brethren" (Matthew 3:8b). They remember that whoever exalts himself will be made low by his God (Matthew 23:12). Shepherds, as strange as it may sound, are also of the sheep. True shepherds know they are fallible, and they are not ashamed to admit their human frailties. They neither think of themselves nor present themselves as lords over God's heritage (I Peter 5:3).

Extreme care should be taken by a congregation when selecting their pastors. It is possible, and too often a reality, that a novice is appointed to this important work. Such an one, warned the apostle, may become "puffed up" with pride (I Timothy 3:6). Such would-be pastors assume a dictatorial attitude that wreaks havoc within the church, and is the source of discouragement, not of solace and admonition.

Much soul searching should be done prior to this appointment on the part of proposed leaders. If ever there is a time for a man to examine himself it is when he is considered for the all-important role of an elder. "Will the importance of the work fill me with a sense of SELF importance?" "Will I be able to handle this work without an air of self righteousness?"

True shepherds will pastor the preachers among them just as they shepherd others under their oversight. From them he will receive leadership, encouragement, cooperation, comfort, and assurance. They will not see him as either a threat, a hired hand, or necessary evil. They will see him as a fellow worker, a friend, and a brother in Christ Jesus. The golden rule will be applied by the elders to the man they select to fill the pulpit. No one can truly appreciate nor fully estimate the value of true shepherds. Let us exhort and encourage them (Hebrews 13:17). A brother was right on target when he suggested, "We do not need shocking shepherds or leaderless leaders. We need pastors, not pesters."

--563 McGukin Road, Bremen, GA 30110.

"Most Of A Minute"

Honesty

By Glenn Colley

A very wise teacher often told his students on examination day, "I'm going to give you two tests today. One in trigonometry, and one in honesty. I hope you can pass both, but if you pass only one, let it be the test of honesty. There are a lot of good men who don't know trigonometry, but there are no good men who are not honest."

Sometimes people who are uncomfortable with the teachings of Christianity forget the fundamental teachings of morality that come from following Christ. Listen to, and enjoy, what the Bible says about Christians and integrity: "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (II Corinthians 8:21).

A person who is serious about being a Christian will make a better mother, father, employer, employee, business partner and friend. In your heart of hearts, don't you want to live the life of a Christian?

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"A Fundamental, A Force Called . . . Love" #2

Continued From Page 1

bodies (I Corinthians 6:19). Fourth, compassion (cf. Colossians 3:12) helps us get along with one another.

(3) "same mind . . . same love . . . one accord
one mind" -- NOTE: Christians are to be of the same/one mind. How? What's the secret? Christians are to share the "same love" with hearts that beat as one! Indeed, love contributes to our

fellowship and helps us live in harmony! LOVE MOTIVATES!

Conclusion

Love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth" (I Corinthians 13:7, 8). Nothing seems to stay the same. Wood decays. Metal rusts. Paint

chips. Children mature. Adults age. But there is one thing that lasts. It is the driving force behind everything we are, the motivating factor behind everything we are to do. It is a fundamental, a force called . . . LOVE!

--2150 Beltline Road, SW Decatur, AL 35601.

The Washing Of Feet, The Holy Kiss, And The New Hermeneutic

Holger Neubauer

Those who are presently pushing for radical change in the church, who are advocating that old ideas be discarded in favor of a new system of Bible interpretation labelled the "New Hermeneutic," base much of their platform on two sugarsticks which they believe show the inconsistency of the church of previous generations in dealing with the cultural backgrounds of the commands and examples of Scripture. These sugarsticks, which they wield as proof of their assumptions, are the admonition of the Lord in John 13:14, 15 when He said, "If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you," and the apostle Paul's admonition in II Corinthians 13:12, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." These two items of Scripture, they say, are examples of the present church understanding certain commands with cultural significance and denying others. The proponents of the New Hermeneutic say we have been inconsistent, in that we have recognized the cultural significance of the "holy kiss" and failed to understand the cultural significance in the role of women and in the doctrine of baptism. However, the role of women as outlined in the New Testament, and in the Biblical doctrine of baptism, are not parallel to either the washing of feet or the holy kiss.

First, the issue of "foot washing," which is really misnomered, and ought to be referred to as "feet washing" (the practice of washing one foot in an assembly is certainly not what Jesus was teaching) is clearly an issue which is to be understood in the cultural framework of the day because the text of John 13 specifically identifies itself as such an issue. Careful attention ought to be given to the Lord's statement in John 13:10, as Jesus responds to Peter's request of having his entire body washed by saying, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Peter wanted the rest of his body washed, but Jesus did not wash the rest of Peter's body because it was clean. Jesus only washed Peter's feet, because only Peter's feet were dirty. Obviously, in a culture where travel was generally done upon foot, and sandals were the foot garb of the day, one's feet would become dirty and hence the need to have them washed after the trip would be evident. Coupled with the fact that the people of the day ate upon low lying tables, where a reclining position would be taken by those that would sup, having their feet outstretched so that one man's face was very close to another man's feet; common courtesy would demand that one would have clean feet before he ate. The disciples in John 13 had gathered to eat without washing their feet, lest when any of them would have initiated the act, they would have been expected to wash the other's feet, which chore generally was given to the lowliest household servant. Jesus arose, and washed the disciples feet to teach humility and

service. However, Jesus washed dirty feet, not clean ones. Today with pavement, shoes, socks, and automobiles, there would be no need to wash feet. If there is need, then all should be willing to stoop and perform lowly service, but to perform an act of service without need is superfluous. Here the text itself demands we come to the conclusion that this issue had cultural significance which limited its scope of application. The principles of service were applied when there was a true need.

Second, the "holy kiss" likewise must be understood in its cultural setting because the Scripture itself points us to that conclusion. The "holy kiss" is a greeting. If kissing was to be practiced, it was to be "holy." However, we can know that no universal pattern was demanded by the apostle Paul because there are other approved greetings in the Scripture. In Galatians 2:9, the "right hand of fellowship" was extended. No evidence of kissing was found here. In Acts 20:1, the Bible mentions "embracing" but no "kissing." Since the Bible itself approves different kinds of greetings, we can then know with intellectual certitude, that Paul did not intend to make the "holy kiss" a universal command, but rather, regulated kissing to be holy, if it should be engaged in.

Both the "washing of feet" and the "holy kiss," are items that ought to be understood in a certain cultural framework, because the Scripture itself

identifies these as such. But, every statement of Scripture ought to be taken as a universal statement that is to be applied by every Christian in every generation, unless the Scripture itself imposes restrictions on those statements. That is why these items are not parallel to allowing different forms of baptism, and allowing women to take leadership roles in the church. The Bible clearly identifies that there is only one acceptable baptism (since the book of Ephesians was written) in Ephesians 4:5, where the Scripture says, "There is one baptism." The role of women, as revealed in the Scripture, is grounded in the creation and not cultural norms. The reason that Paul gave that women were not to teach or usurp authority over the man (I Timothy 2:12), is given in I Timothy 2:13, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." The Scripture forever settles this issue in the very beginning of life.

Lest the Old Hermeneutic is scrapped, and a new system of Bible interpretation is embraced, all should be careful that their actions do not become like those rebels of Jeremiah's day, who would not heed Jehovah's call when he said, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your soul. But they said, we will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16).

--Benton Harbor church of Christ, 1495 E. Empire Ave., Benton Harbor, MI 49022.

Reaping What We Sow

Don Deffenbaugh

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

For years this nation has been sowing the seeds of do your own thing, have it your own way, follow what you think is the loving thing to do, and we are told that this is the "me" generation.

As a result, we human beings have exalted ourselves as gods, above the God of heaven. Everyone is doing what is "right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:15). Like Israel of old, this nation does evil in the "sight of the Lord" (Judges 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 61).

Los Angeles. The philosophy demonstrated has been, regardless of what happens to others, I will have my own way. No one involved in the entire affair seems to be concerned about behavior in keeping with God's will. This nation is reaping the harvest of the seeds sown!

Murphy Brown. National leaders are now being criticized because they publicly uphold family values. We have taught people that they have a right to have it their own way. God's will for the family has been disregarded (Matthew 19:9). Why should we be surprised that people are doing evil in the sight of the Lord? our social programs, television, counselors, and some churches have

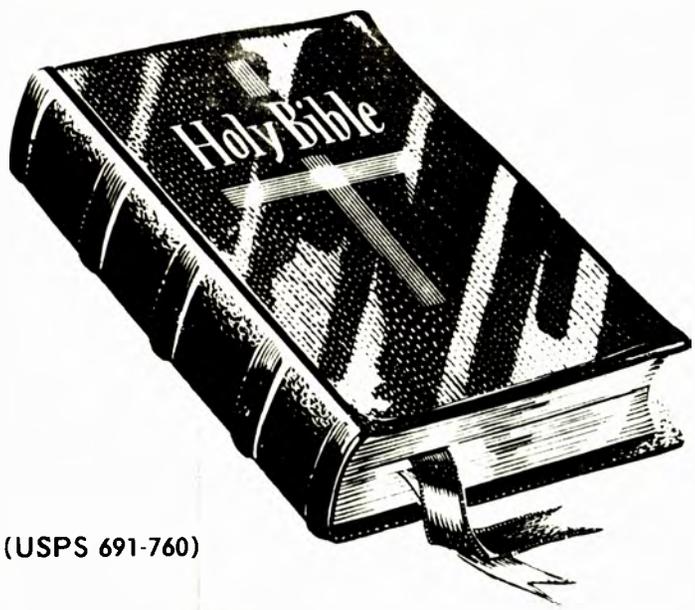
encouraged it for years. We are reaping the harvest of the seeds sown!

Homosexuality. This sin is described by local, national, and many church leaders as an alternative life style. At least one sports figure involved in this immorality has contacted the AIDS virus and is being promoted as a national hero. Thousands are dying from AIDS. The national monetary burden of taking care of these people is staggering. Many innocent people are suffering. We have told folks that they have a right to do their own thing. We are doing evil in the sight of the Lord (Romans 1:24-32), and are reaping what has been sown!

Many brethren are doing their own thing. We are being taught that God will cover our evil deeds. Repentance is a word not found in the vocabulary of many church leaders. The preaching of Jesus is disregarded (Matthew 4:17). People are being misled, churches divided, and souls are being lost. We are doing evil in the sight of the Lord and we are reaping what has been sown!

"For 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 6:8).

--1330 Benton Ave., Neosho, MO 64850-3056.



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Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus
Words of Truth and soberness."

orth the
ts 26:25

VOLUME 28

OCTOBER 23, 1992

NUMBER 43

"Miles Wide But Inches Deep"



Dalton Key

becoming "many but not much," and "miles wide but inches deep," the devil is surely rejoicing.

When convicting, Christ-centered sermons are replaced with witty, after-dinner-type nonsense; when questionable lyrics and unauthorized musical forms in worship are overlooked in our

Satan is ever at work tempting the Lord's church to confuse priorities and misdirect efforts. He delights in seeing us exchange quality for quantity, substance for froth. And if the recent observations of knowledgeable men of God are correct, if we are

preoccupation with the pulsating, toe-tapping, crowd-generating melody; when the eternal and spiritual are forced to take a back seat to the temporal and the social, apostasy can not be too far distant.

Mark it down and underscore it -- packed buildings, ecstatic crowds, and bulging budgets must never be sought at the expense of divine truth and godly reverence. The price is too high. The price has always been too high.

When Constantine (272-337 A.D.) married the church to the world, the early church swelled. She saw a sudden and dramatic increase in numbers. The Lord's body became bloated with hordes of unconverted heathen idolaters which scurried to join her ranks in return for financial and political favors.

And what was the result? The world did not become Christian, but the church did become worldly. History records the sad story, as complete apostasy transformed the beautiful bride of Christ into the grotesque monster of Rome.

When will we learn the lesson of history? When will we acknowledge the fact that to stand for nothing leaves us susceptible to fall for anything? When will we admit that in striving to please everyone, we generally please no one, except the devil and his crowd?

Many may be seen as good, but much is better. Swelling is one thing, genuine growth another. In the Last Day, we will be judged, not by how many there are of us, but by what there is within us.

--801 N.E. 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

A Heavenly Cause



Johnny Ramsey

The context proves that Satan was the strong man. In the ability of Jesus to cast out demons we learn that He had come to earth "to bring to naught the power of the devil" (I John 3:8). In dying without sin our Redeemer destroyed Satan's dominion over death and hades (Hebrews 2:14-16). Death henceforth holds no sting, and we praise God for the victory over the grave (I Corinthians 15:55-57). In Revelation 20, in the midst of great symbolism, we are thrilled to see the enemy of our spirits, even the devil, bound in chains. We believe this represents the power of Truth as it is

In a very popular song we hear the reminder that a brave man ought to be willing to "March into hell for a heavenly cause." There is solid background of Bible thought for that statement. In Mark 3, we learn that Christ had entered the strong man's house and defeated him.

proclaimed and obeyed. Such things always limit the thrust of satanic influence.

In Luke 10:18, Jesus told the apostles of the result of their work on the limited commission. The devil's power waned sharply and suddenly, just as lightning falls from heaven, when the special servants of the Lord fulfilled their charge. The very same principle obtains today. When we, as God's children, preach the truth and live the gospel (Philippians 1:27) we bind the demons of hell and shackle their fiendish efforts. This is a heavenly cause because we "sit with Christ in heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6) when we become "dead unto sin and alive unto God" (Romans 6:11). Every time we stand up for God's Way of righteousness we put a dent into the old serpent's plans (Revelation 12:9; Philippians 2:15). When we shine as a beacon upon a hill the prince of darkness fades into oblivion in someone else's life. Each time we lift a sinner out of the gutter of iniquity we bring to Christ a broken life that needs mending. T. O. Chisholm has graphically painted the picture:

*Bring Christ your broken life so marred by sin,
He will create anew and make whole again;
Your empty, wasted years He will restore,
And your iniquities remember no more.*

Can we be counted on to meet the challenge of Christianity?

--3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

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

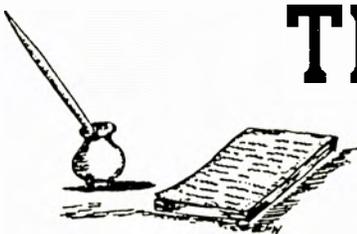
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Glenn Colley.....Editor

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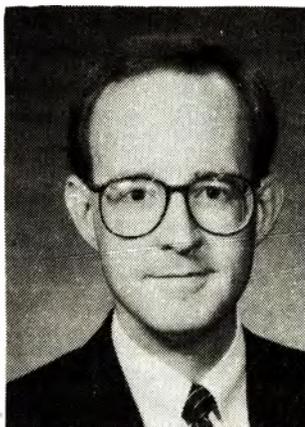
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The Editor's Pen

Glenn Colley

Dirty Clothes



Glenn Colley

I spoke with a surgeon the other day, and our conversation drifted to the special clothing he wears in surgery. Most, if not all, of that surgical garb is made of paper. I don't know if it's more expensive to use throw-away garments rather than washing cloth ones, but it doesn't matter. The

reason for using paper is not monetary, but sanitary. Dreaded diseases are often contagious and can be carried in contaminated clothes.

Leviticus 13 lists precautions that people were to take when they came in contact with a person who had leprosy. Verse 52 commands the burning of clothes worn by a leper. The risk of spreading this filthy, dreaded disease was too great to not destroy the clothes.

I've mentioned these things to spotlight the 23rd verse in Jude. The context is focused on bringing

folks to repentance and salvation. Some, he says, should be saved "with compassion." That is, they will be converted easily without much talk of future damnation without repentance. Now Verse 23: "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

What would it mean to "hate the garment" of the lost person? Sometimes the reason we fail in efforts to convert the lost is that we may be as worldly in some areas as them! Do I display a hatred for sin which at its finish "brings forth death" (James 1:15)?

Let us ever resolve to love the sinner without forgetting to hate his sin. Without this hatred from faithful Christians, that sinner may never recognize the seriousness of his lost condition! When he lifts his eyes in hell, how will he remember you? If his sin is made clear to him and he continues in it, he will always remember the efforts made to regain him. Heaven, for ourselves and those about us, is our life's primary goal. May those living about us remember us from that blessed home.

Christ Crucified

David Deffenbaugh

"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). Of all the work the apostle Paul did, that was the distilled summation of his efforts. He told the Christians at Corinth that's why he had come to them, why he was writing on this occasion, and why he did everything he did on their behalf.

How does that set with us for a summation of what we are all about? Surely there is more to it than that isn't there? But . . . is there really anything greater than that? The crucifixion of Jesus says it all for us. Let's consider what that event means.

The crucifixion of Jesus shows just how much God loves mankind. Our interest and concern for something, anything, is demonstrated in what we are willing to give or sacrifice for that thing. God gave his only begotten Son on our behalf when we were most unworthy of that gift and sacrifice. How else could we know of the extent of his great love?

The crucifixion of Jesus shows the enormity of sin. Life is full of problems. Everybody has them. Admittedly, some are worse than others. But what most people in this world fail to realize is just how big a problem sin is. But it was necessary for the sinless Son of God to give his life on the cross because of this problem of sin (Romans 3:24-26). How else could we know how big a problem sin really is?

The crucifixion of Jesus shows the degree of obedience required in response to God. Jesus is our example (I Peter 2:21). Not only in how we ought to treat other people and the kinds of attitudes we ought to have, but also in doing God's will. He held nothing back, even though his personal preference may have been otherwise. As man responds to God through Christ we must understand that neither can we hold anything back (Matthew 16:24).

--1330 Benton Ave., Neosho, MO 64850 - 3056.

It Happened Again

Glenn Colley

I can't believe it happened again. Oh, I know it happens every day, and will continue, but I will never get used to it. Today I sat with a boy in his early twenties. He's friendly and candid and easy to talk to. His two-year old son was bouncing around us as we talked. Our discussion began when he said, "I guess you heard what happened to me and my wife." He elaborated. She began some time ago slipping out to see other men. First one . . . then another. He described himself tracing her down and begging her to come home to her family. She did for a while, but soon left again. He got Christian friends to plead with her with no results.

It's all legal now. "Divorce" has such a tragic sound. When Solomon proposed a baby be split in two, he wasn't thinking of anything more

heartbreaking than what we casually call "joint custody."

Yes, it happened again. The Devil flashed the bright lights of sin. That young mother was convinced that she had been deprived of the good life, and sin was clearly the answer. That which she thought was the sparkling treasury of pure gold in a palace was no more than the sparkle of light from a broken glass in the alleyway.

The lesson from the prodigal son of Luke 15 needs preaching over and over again. People must know that the happiness promised in the commission of sin is a lie. The Devil makes promises he cannot and will not fulfill. Every broken home should have a sign that says "someone here foolishly believed a devil's lie" . . . because that's the truth.

Tell It Like It Was And Is!

Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.

Many warnings (I Corinthians 9:16), and admonitions are given in the Scriptures (II Timothy 4:2-4) concerning the preaching of God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The Word of God also makes it abundantly clear that God's instructions are to be preached in a way that the Truth can be understood (I Corinthians 2:1-2). The

apostle Paul asked in I Corinthians 14:8 "if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound who will prepare for war?"

In the church of our Lord today, preachers are presenting their lessons from the Bible and concluding their remarks by encouraging those in the audience to give their lives to Jesus. This

Continued On Page 3

Can We Stand Against Satan?

Kenneth McClain

Paul speaking to Christians says, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10, 11). It is necessary to put on the whole armour, not merely the parts that we might want to wear, if we expect to defeat the devil. What will Satan do to us if we let him?

Satan desires your downfall, the ruin of your soul and final destruction. He wants you to travel a dark and dangerous road to defeat. He has never passed up an opportunity to lift up himself against God and God's people. He will never give up; he tugs at the heart of every Christian in hopes of taking them back into a sinful world. To deny the reality of such an evil one does not take away the threat against the soul of man.

Satan wants to cast down every soul from the heights of spiritual living to the depths of torment. He knows that eternal life is in Christ, so he wants to keep every soul away from Christ. Satan does not want anyone working to defeat the forces of evil because they would be fighting against him.

The devil is always trying very hard to get God's people to fall from grace. His argument is that one cannot fall from grace. He hopes people will become careless about their faith in the Lord, fall asleep, fail to watch and finally, make shipwreck of the faith. We live in a time when so many members of the church get covered up with materialism and have no time for the things of God. Satan rejoices when this happens.

There are many ways that Satan works to get God's people. He works to get us to become

careless and indifferent toward the Lord's commands. He knows that if we turn aside from the word of God there will be no faith because faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). He would also have us to believe that we do not need to work in the Lord's kingdom -- just as long as we do no evil we will be saved (I Corinthians 15:58). Satan works very hard at getting us to die out of Christ so that we will miss heaven. Satan's goal is to see every soul lost in hell!

May we never allow Satan to turn our hearts from Christ. Christ's voice is one of mercy and love, and

his path is one of light and life. The path of Satan is one of darkness and despair that ends in destruction. Jesus said to Peter, ". . . Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired 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). The Lord did not want Peter's faith to fail and He does not want our faith to fail. James tells us how to stand against the devil. He says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). As long as we submit ourselves to God and resist the devil we will be able to stand against the devil.

--2842 Shelby St., Indianapolis, IN 46203.

They Work Their Wings Off

Jeff Jarrett

When my family and I lived in East Tennessee, we were acquainted with a man who took up bee-keeping as a hobby. The last time I spoke to him, he had about a dozen full-sized hives. He also had an observation hive. It was a box approximately 2 feet square, framed in wood, with honey comb enclosed between glass panels. He kept a queen and a small swarm of bees in this hive. On occasion he would close the hive with the bees in it and take it to schools to teach children about honey bees. I have spent hours merely watching those bees work.

On one occasion, as I was watching the observation hive, the owner asked me if I knew how to tell a bee's age. Of course I didn't. He said that a bee's age is determined by the condition of it's wings. Because bees constantly work, their

wings get a lot of wear and tear. The young bees have wide, well formed wings, whereas the older ones have narrow, torn and tattered wings. The bee doesn't die of "old age." It dies when its wings are completely worn out and it can no longer work or fly. Near the point of death, the bee points itself away from the hive and begins to fly never to return again. Imagine that! The bee literally wears itself out working!

There is a lesson in this for the child of God. As Christians we must be diligent servants doing the work of the Lord. In Revelation chapters two and three, when Jesus evaluated the condition of the seven churches of Asia **eleven times** He referred to their work and the work of God. Their degree of acceptance was directly proportional to the kind and amount of work they were doing. James records these words: "But whoso looketh into the

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Tell It Like It Was And Is!

Continued From Page 2

admonition for people to give their lives to Jesus, without further instructions, could have tragic results. One who is a member of a denomination could very well state, "Why, I gave my life to Jesus when I was seven years old." Another who has been serving sin all of his or her life could say, "Okay, I give my life to Jesus." The tragedy is that both would walk out of the assembly lost. Other preachers are encouraging their audiences, "If you are not a Christian, accept God's grace and love." Brethren, those in sin desperately need to "give their lives to Jesus," and to "accept God's grace and love," but not everyone in our assembly knows how to do this.

Contrast the above practice with Peter's sermon on Pentecost. Peter gave three lines of proof that Jesus Christ was the Son of God: Mighty works, wonders, and signs (Acts 2:22), the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:25-31), and the pouring forth of that which they saw and heard (Acts 2:33). In Acts 2:36 Peter indicated that the God of the universe had made the same Jesus they had crucified both Lord and Christ. Peter preached the Gospel and it produced guilt on the part of those who were not in

harmony with God's Way (Acts 2:37). When these convicted believers asked what they needed to do for their sinful condition, Peter told them to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). In this New Testament example of conversion, the Truth, the problem, and the solution are all set forth in a clear, precise, understandable way. Jesus is established as the Christ, the Jews identified as his murderers, and instructions given (specific) to enable the sinners to obtain the forgiveness of sins.

Brethren, when people in our audiences hear our lessons they should be made to realize their spiritual condition and understand what they need to do to become children of God. Many today are teaching agnosticism; you can't know the Truth. And from some of the "preaching I have heard in the last six months, I can understand how some cannot know the Truth -- it (the Truth) isn't being preached in a way it can be understood.

Brethren, let's preach God's Word so men can know the Truth and be made free (John 8:32).

--Tennessee Bible College, Cookeville, TN 38501.

"Most Of A Minute"

By Glenn Colley

Honest Things

A small boy was on the witness stand in an important lawsuit. The prosecuting attorney cross-examined him, then delivered, he thought, a crushing blow to the boy's testimony. "Your father has been telling you how to testify, hasn't he?" "Yes," the boy didn't hesitate with the answer. "Now," said the lawyer, triumphantly, "Just tell us how your father told you to testify."

"Well," the boy said modestly, "Father told me the lawyers would try to tangle me in my testimony, but if I would just be careful to tell the truth, I could repeat the same thing every time."

When it comes to a Christian's honesty, what he could gain by defrauding or being dishonest with his associates never really enters the picture. For, you see, whether ten cents or ten thousand dollars could be gained by unethical means, the Christian's integrity would be sold. Whether or not he will be honest isn't just between him and his associate, but rather between him and God.

God's word says, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17).

"Henry"

Dale Jenkins

His name was Henry, or at least that was the English equivalent of it. He was there the very first day we opened the English Bible Reading School in Dneperotrosk. The students came from every crust and tier of society, only, most of them were young. I liked that. Why, if we were to build a church in this city that's what we'd need. Young, eager, energetic minds willing to study and learn. And it didn't surprise me that most of them were young. After all, youth usually adjusts better to change and accepts it more readily.

Henry was different. He was at least 50, and that's being kind. What hair he had was graying and his constant smile revealed a gold filling where a tooth had once lived. That first class all we did was read the text and then practice vocabulary words. I didn't really know what to expect. The other students eagerly showed off their already fair pronunciation of English. All except Henry. He lagged behind and usually would say the word by himself after everyone else, and usually, poorly. Why even one of the students snapped at Henry, in Russian of course, I still don't know what she said, but that is probably best. But Henry didn't seem to mind, he just nodded and kept on smiling.

Our second class, there was Henry again. Broad smile, suit and tie. I figured he'd realize that he didn't know quite enough English or that he just didn't quite fit in with the rest of the class. This day we finished our lessons early and had 10 minutes left before the next batch of students would arrive. What a great time to get to know the students in my class. I went around the room, we had a neuro-surgeon, a senior college professor, a young lady in her last year of school studying history and a few other interesting folk. I waited until last to ask Henry to tell me about himself. Maybe we would run out of time and Henry wouldn't be embarrassed too much.

But it was I who was embarrassed. Henry stood, smiled widely, bowed uncomfortably and spoke. "My name is Henry. I am a locksmith by." Trade or profession was the word he was searching for, but I was surprised, though the English was somewhat broken, he was doing well. "In the 60's I told a friend that I did not think Communism would last. A party member heard me and I was in political prison work camp for 10 years. My family did not know what happened to me, nor did I know what was happening to them." The class was hushed. Here was one of the great ones. He'd spoken a

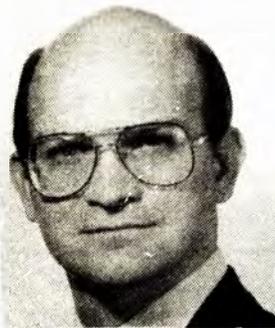
word against Communism and lived. It seemed they were even impressed. He continued: "Nobody's a communist here now," and he flashed his biggest grin yet. I was ready to applaud and wave my flag then, but Henry wasn't finished yet. "The last missionaries that came to our city taught me about Jesus and I was baptized to become a new person. Now I am *really free*.."

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

"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 . . . For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:3-8).

--Rt. 6, Box 28, Hamilton, AL 35570.

More Than A Movement



Dalton Key

The past several months have witnessed an uneasy shift in our terminology. Much is being written in various brotherhood papers, and much is being said in countless lectures and sermons, concerning "our movement" and "our fellowship." But little is being said about the church.

Not so long ago, preachers of the gospel proudly proclaimed the beauty and singularity of the Lord's church, as called out from the world and set apart from all denominational bodies. But times are changing. It appears that now, at least in the minds of many, loyalty to the Lord and his church is being blindly bartered for allegiance to a human movement or a nebulous, vaguely-bounded fellowship.

Please do not misunderstand. As Christians living in this land of freedom, we owe much to the honest and truth-seeking leaders of what has been commonly coined, "The American Restoration Movement." Men such as Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, James O'Kelley -- along with others of like faith and fortitude, performed a tremendous service to the world by leading men back to the Bible. But we must not forget that our roots run deeper than the American Restoration. If we are the church which Jesus built, we must trace our roots back to Pentecost as recorded in Acts, chapter two.

Only an ingrate would neglect to give thanks for those godly men who gave of their very lives in

restoring New Testament Christianity. But God's only son gave his life in death to purchase more than a mere movement of men. His blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

We are not members of a denomination founded

Bible-Centered Preaching

Franklin Camp

Another root of the restoration was Bible-founded and Bible-centered preaching. The men that set about to call man back to the Bible KNEW THE BIBLE AND PREACHED THE BIBLE. The Bible was their textbook. This root is fast drying up. THERE IS TOO MUCH PREACHING TODAY THAT HAS EVERYTHING IN IT BUT THE BIBLE. I may not know whether a man is quoting from Norman Vincent Peale or not, but I know enough about the Bible to know when a man is quoting from it. It is a tragedy for a man to get up in the pulpit with a stack of magazines and Dale Carnegie's books so the man in the pew would not know what was taking place. It is high time we put the preacher back in the study with his Bible and let him know we expect him to "get with it and preach it." Some sermons I have heard recently would not have been tolerated in the country church where I grew up. He might have preached one, but that would have been the limit. They wanted the Bible, and a man either preached that or he did not preach.

by Alexander Campbell. Campbell never intended such. He sought to point men back, beyond himself, to the risen Savior. His desire was not for disciples to worship at the shrine of his, or any other man's movement. He urged men to unite in the one, non-denominational, New Testament Church.

I am thankful for "our movement." I appreciate the blessings and warmth of "our fellowship." But my allegiance, my loyalty, yea my very life, belongs to my Lord and His Church. Furthermore, I intend to continue calling the Lord's church, the church of Christ, what it is -- the church.

--801 NE 15th, Amarillo, TX 79107.

They Work Their Wings Off

Continued From Page 3

perfect law of liberty, and continueth (therein), he being not a forgetful hearer, *but a doer of the work*, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). If we desire to see the spiritual blessings of this life or the life to come we MUST BE "A DOER OF THE WORK."

We must be a people who "work our wings off" in the service of the Lord.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, 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).

--Petersburg, Indiana.

October 30, 1992

See Inside Articles:

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 - Christ's Church
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- Should Women Be Serving The
- Lord's Supper In Our Assemblies?
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - Proof Text Preaching!

Volume 28 Number 44

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The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but say
Words of Truth and soberness." -- 1

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Discerning

Charles Abernathy

Our fast-paced modern world exerts great influence on the way we see things. There is a danger that we may carry a worldly viewpoint over into the church. The apostle Paul addressed that human weakness in II Corinthians 11:3, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." We who dwell in our complex modern world should, like Paul, be mindful of our spiritual perspectives.

Spiritual perspective is the topic of Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:28-30. We often consider the first statement, "Let every man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." We may not often consider the rest of that lesson, "For he that eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Understanding that lesson depends on our ability to discern the Lord's body.

Thomas discerned the Lord's body (John 20:26-31). The account was included in the scripture so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. There is simplicity here. This is reliable testimony of an eyewitness. This is irrefutable evidence through which we gain knowledge. Thomas

knew, and we know. That knowledge helps us correctly discern the Lord's body. Let's not forget though, that the church is also the Lord's body in a spiritual perspective.

Paul simplified that concept for us once again. Notice how I Corinthians 11 flows right into the discourse on members of the body in chapter twelve. All the members are one body. We are all baptized into that body. God set the members into the body as it pleased him. The members should have the same care one for another. Paul here reminds us to consider the spiritual body of Christ which is right here on earth: the church.

We often need an object lesson to help us with our spiritual perspectives. Sometimes we humans use civic club criteria to discern the work of the church. What draws big crowds? The book says Christ on the Cross (John 12:32, John 6:45). Men think they can improve on that. We humans often need an object lesson. One of the best perspective - correcting object lessons ever given was taught by Jesus after he saw a widow contribute two mites.

Let's put ourselves into that object lesson. Mark 12:41-44 tells that Jesus sat near the treasury and beheld how the people cast their money in. Suppose that you and I were there and had the job of taking care of the collection. Suppose we counted the money and it came to one thousand talents and two mites. Suppose we

deposited the money in the bank and sent the deposit slip to our accountant. Then we put the amount up on a signboard in the auditorium. Certainly everyone from the banker and accountant on down to you and I who sees that amount knows that a thousand talents is more than two mites. Why, two mites only amount to a farthing, you know.

Our worldly wisdom tells us that figures do not lie. Jesus tells us that figures alone do not tell the whole story. There is a spiritual perspective that

cannot be discerned from a worldly viewpoint alone. Jesus said the widow cast in more than all the others. The whole point of this object lesson is clear and simple because Jesus revealed it to us.

There is a danger that we may carry a worldly viewpoint over into the church. The Lord's church is not a civic club, it is the pillar and ground of the truth. In God's wisdom the church is the world's only source of the gospel of Christ. The work of

the body is accomplished through the combined functions of all the members. There is one simple exercise that will help you be mindful and discerning. Each week when you assemble in the auditorium take a good look at your signboard. Ask yourself, "Which is the most this week, the dollars or the cents?" The collection never seems to come out even dollars, does it? Did you ever really think about where that change comes from?

--Council Hill, OK.

A Merry Heart

Dalton Key

It has been estimated that the average person is happy only about one-fourth of the time. About one-fourth of the time he is very unhappy; and the other half of the time he is neither happy nor unhappy. Or as someone once put it, "Happiness is the interval between periods of unhappiness."

Are you a happy person? The Psalmist describes a happy, blessed man as one whose "delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psalms 1:1). Jesus paints a word picture of a happy man in the beatitudes of Matthew's fifth chapter. The apostle Paul encourages us to "Rejoice evermore," and to "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (I Thessalonians 5:16; Philippians 4:4).

Did you know that a cheerful disposition and a healthy body go hand in hand? One doctor told his patient, "If you can't take a joke, you'll have to take medicine." In front of him was a copy of the Bible, opened to Proverbs 17:22, which reads, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." The doctor was right. Not long ago, a study of aging was conducted during which a committee outlined a ten point program to help people live past the century mark. Not

surprisingly, one of the suggestions was "cultivate a sense of humor."

Allow me to ask again. Are you a happy person? You know the Bible teaches joy. As a child of God, you have everything under heaven, and in heaven, to rejoice about. You have been blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

And after all, "the surly bird catches the germ."

BIBLE VERSE



For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. I PET. 1:24, 25

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Don't Miss This Article!

It concerns me greatly that so many Americans seem to be unaware of, or unconcerned with, the moral differences between the liberal and conservative presidential candidates. I know the economy is important -- but without the morals involved in the traditional, Biblical family, the economy will matter little. For this reason, I'm encouraging everyone who loves the Bible to look closely at the beliefs and convictions of the two leading candidates. Perhaps this article will help.

In regard to those who practice homosexuality, and want to be recognized in our country as normal, the conservative candidate **OPPOSES** "including sexual preference as a protected minority receiving preferential status under civil rights statutes at the federal, state, and local level." He goes on to say "We oppose any legislation or law that legally recognizes same-sex marriages and allows such couples to adopt children or provide foster care . . . we support continued exclusion of homosexuals from the military as a matter of good order and discipline."

Now hear from the liberal candidate: He opposes "discrimination or deprivation of rights on the basis of race, gender . . . sexual orientation or other characteristics irrelevant to ability." He seeks to "Provide civil rights protection for gay men and lesbians and an end to Defense Department discrimination." "We condemn anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, bigotry and negative stereo-

typing of all kinds."

Notice please that the liberal candidate links homosexuality with race and gender -- characteristics which are given at conception by God. Does the sin of homosexuality belong here too? NO! NO! At a political rally in May, the liberal candidate met with members of the gay and lesbian force, and said, "I have a vision, you're part of it." A speaker from the Democratic convention who has AIDS said, "The Clinton-Gore team is the most pro-lesbian and pro-gay ticket in history."

In regard to the moral/spiritual question of abortion there is again a clear difference between the candidates. The conservative candidate has steadfastly opposed abortion and the Roe vs. Wade decision. He recently said in Washington, "The Supreme Court's decision in Roe vs. Wade was wrong and should be overturned." He works to get people of like beliefs on the Supreme Court. He has consistently refused to use tax dollars to pay for research that involves transplanting tissue taken from aborted unborn babies into other persons. He has banned promotion of abortion as a method of birth control in federally funded clinics. He has strongly defended the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits the use of federal dollars to pay for abortions, except to save the mother's life. When asked about proposals to allow minor girls to obtain abortions without parental consent he strongly opposed them saying, "This idea is crazy."

How does the liberal candidate view abortion? If you took the last paragraph and reversed it, you'd see his view. He has, he says, always been pro-choice and has never wavered in his support for Roe vs. Wade. (Roe vs. Wade allows abortion for any reason, even as a method of birth control, even in the late stages of pregnancy). He promises that if elected, he will make the support of abortion a litmus test for his nominees to the Supreme Court. In other words, they couldn't serve on that court unless they were pro-choice! He boasts that he has "fought against" parental consent laws in Arkansas, and says, "I'm opposed to parental consent, by the way, and I oppose a bill that would do that." Under his national health plan, abortion on demand would be funded.

Here are some things preachers, teachers and parents need to be helping folks understand:

PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT HOMOSEXUALITY CAN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT:

1. Homosexuality is a sin against God. (Genesis 19, I Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:26)
2. Homosexuality is always going to be against Biblical, responsible and wholesome family values. (Colossians 3:17-21)
3. Homosexuality will always be against nature. (Romans 1:26) -- "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against

nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT ABORTION RIGHTS CAN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT:

1. The aborted "fetus" looks exactly like a dead baby. We shouldn't be surprised, for Psalm 127:3 says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward." One man recently said, "We wouldn't have abortion if God had made the womb with a window in it."
2. Murder of innocent human life is immoral and sinful. (Matthew 7:12) (Galatians 5:19-21)
3. It is unnatural for a mother to decide to abort her child. When people turn away from God, they often lose natural affection. (Romans 1:31) -- ". . . Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."
4. Any society must legislate some morals to survive. Some say "You can't legislate morality." But think! Murder, robbery, child-abuse, rape, are all questions of morals. Where will our country be if we elect leaders who hold to immoral beliefs on issues like abortion and homosexuality.

Hear me clearly: My point is not about politics. This article is not intended to be a political "pitch" for any candidate. It is rather an attempt to help our readers better understand the differences between the major candidates, since these differences have tremendous spiritual significance. It is to encourage people to let their characters and beliefs be molded by our Lord.

Vote. Do what your citizenship allows, so Christians and their principles can be heard by our leaders.

Christ's Church

ROCK-BOTTOMED. "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). The church of Christ is built on the solid rock foundation of the truth Simon Bar-Jona confessed: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (I Corinthians 3:11). God has set Christ, "the stone which the builders rejected" as "the chief cornerstone" (Psalms 118:22; Acts 4:11). Whatever is not founded on the rock will fall. "Every plant which my heavenly father has not planted will be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

CHRIST-BUILT. "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). The church belongs to Christ. He built it himself.

He laid the foundation by his death and resurrection. He set apostles and prophets in the church (I Corinthians 12:28) and through his blood and the word

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The Bible Must Be Exposed To Our Lives

Elwood Holt

The story is told of some savages, to whom was given a sun-dial. So desirous were they to honor and keep it sacred that they housed it in, and built a roof over it. Of course in doing so they defeated the purpose of it.

I often wonder if we have done our BIBLE this way? Do we treat the word of God in like manner? Is it too sacred for us to use daily? Have we built a house around it because we know it is a sacred volume, so that we have shut it off from ourselves? If so, then we are like the savages. We have the wrong attitude toward it.

It is surprising just how many people look upon the Bible as being a book so Holy, physically, that they deframe it by merely touching it. I have seen many pick it up with such reverence that one would get the idea that they felt that it should not be touched at all. This is not true of this book. It is not the material book that is sacred; it is the glorious contents of it.

I would not purposely abuse a Bible. I saw a man beat one once, over a period of time, until he tore it up. He didn't mean any harm. He was a good man, but his rough use of the physical book did not leave a good impression upon the hearts of his hearers.

Some few have been known to risk their lives to keep the book from burning when their houses went up in smoke. This is the wrong attitude toward the Bible. A greater misuse of this sacred volume is the non-use to which the average person puts it.

How long has it been since you read a chapter in the Bible? A few months ago, in our mid-week service, five different men read a chapter from James. James, you know, has but five chapters. It is one of the most wonderful books in the Bible. It is a spiritual

tonic for the soul. And, now it is a good time of the year to read and study it. Between each chapter we had a song and a prayer. Do you have any idea how long it took us to read the book? We didn't read fast. It took less than thirty minutes to read it, including the songs and prayers between chapters. I know because I checked the time when we began and when we ended. Everyone enjoyed the service to the fullest. We were together longer than the 30 minutes but that was all the time required to read an entire book in the Bible. Why, that's not even as long as your favorite television program, is it? And then we say we do not have time to study the word of our Redeemer? Humanity ought to be ashamed for its terrible neglect of this all-important duty. Don't be afraid to read and study your Bibles. When you wear one out, buy another one.

If you want to write in your Bibles, do so. Make notes -- write down your favorite passages. I wouldn't have a Bible I couldn't write in. That is not desecrating the Book. The thing that is Holy is not the paper, ink and thread -- the thing that is Holy is the divine message contained therein.

A young man committed suicide one time. He placed the Bible over the heart and fired through it. His mother had the preacher to read from the blood-stained book at the funeral service. Did she think that some merit would come from his reading from that particular copy? Did she think her son received special merit because he held the book over his heart as he took his life? That is a sad story, but that is a perverted way of thinking.

When people show me their new Bibles I tell them to study them now. READ THEM. Meditate upon the eternal words. A close investigation of the great Book will always lead the student to wells of

real truths. If infidels would only read with open minds, the crop of unbelievers would rapidly diminish. The black flag cannot wave where the Bible has a chance, even a small chance. Great minds

accept the inspiration of the Bible. Little minds attempt to disprove and belittle the Book.

A sun-dial has to be exposed to the sun to do its work. The Bible must be similarly exposed to our

minds and souls to effect in our lives what it can do. GOD GAVE US THE GREATEST BOOK IN THE WORLD. LET US ALL USE IT.

Should Women Be Serving The Lord's Supper In Our Assemblies?

Cecil May, Jr.

The specific restrictions the Bible places on women's participation in worship leadership are found in I Corinthians 14:33-35 and I Timothy 2:8-15.

The Corinthians passage forbids women "speaking," even to "ask a question," "in the assemblies," "when the whole church has come together in one place" (14:23, 34).

The Timothy passage prohibits women's exercise of leadership over men "everywhere" (2:8). In context, reference is to leadership in teaching the word and prayer. Woman is to submit and learn; man is to lead and teach.

It is evident in the New Testament that women prayed, prophesied, participated with their husbands in teaching erring preachers, and managed to convince whole towns that Jesus was the Christ (I Corinthians 11:5; Acts 2:17; 21:9; 18:26; John 4:28-30, 39). All of this, it is reasonable to conclude, was done without violating the restrictions imposed in these passages.

It is irrelevant to object, as some do, that other churches did not have these two epistles. They had the same teaching, as Paul mentions in this very context: "as in all the assemblies of the saints" (I Corinthians 14:33).

In the questions regarding the serving of the Lord's supper, the issue is not "speaking" (I Corinthians 14):

so we must inquire as to whether serving at the Lord's table, as that task is done in our assemblies, is "exercising authority" (I Timothy 2:12).

First, note that I use *exercise* or *have* rather than *usurp*. To *usurp* authority suggests grabbing it from those who are opposed to giving it. Emphasizing this word has led some to conclude that if men allow a woman to operate in a position of authority, she is not *usurping* authority, since the men have granted it to her. Although the English word *usurp* suggests that idea in current usage, the Greek word used by Paul does not. No translation made since 1611 of which I am aware translates it as *usurp*.

Men do not have the authority to grant a woman

authority that the Bible forbids women to have.

Second, we should realize that, while observance of the Lord's supper on the Lord's day is a biblical requirement, much about the way we do it is a matter of our own choice. It is certain that the church in New Testament times did not use gold or silver plated communion ware stacked on an oak table in front of the congregation. The congregation did not sit in pews, and they may not even have all faced toward the front. In many cases they likely sat around the walls of a room.

At the inauguration of the Lord's supper, the disciples were evidently around a table

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"Most Of A Minute"

By Glenn Colley

Have you ever been in such a fix that you saw no possible way of escape? Most of us have. The author Mark Twain once wrote a story entitled "The Terrible Catastrophe." Before he was finished the characters were in such a predicament that whatever any of them did, they would all be destroyed. He concluded the story with these words: "I have these characters in such a fix I cannot get them out. Anyone who thinks he can is welcome to try."

Once in a while we may find ourselves feeling this way about temptation to do wrong. We may feel like any option we choose will be sinful. Is there any way out of this fix? God says there is.

Paul writes in I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Proof Text Preaching!

Jerri Manasco

Is it no longer valid to resort to proof texts in our preaching and teaching? Is it no longer fashionable to be able to point to a verse or verses and say, "This is the Lord's statement" concerning the topic in hand? Some men seem to be saying that we cannot use proof text preaching today and deal with pertinent issues of our day at the same time. Proof text preaching is simply the practice of saying, "Here is what the Bible says about it!" Is that valid or not?

Jesus didn't know that proof texts were meaningless! He used proof texts in his combat with Satan (Matthew 4:1-10). He cited a proof text to emphasize his ministry in Nazareth (Luke 4:16 - 21ff). He at least referred to a proof text to verify a spiritually dry atmosphere in Israel (Luke 4:24-27). Jesus cited a proof text to answer a vital question (Matthew 22:37-39) and to establish the validity of the resurrection (Luke 20:27-38). I wonder how modern intellectuals in the church would have met that controversy?

Peter seemed to feel rather comfortable with proof texts! His great Sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2) is really a citation of proof texts with

appropriate comments. He quoted from Joel (Joel 2:28-32) as well as the Psalms (Psalm 16:10ff; 110:1). He made a "therefore" application of the cited passages (Acts 2:30, 33, 36). Paul and Stephen cited scripture backgrounds for their sermons (Acts 7; Acts 13).

Such preaching is simple but not simplistic. Such preaching gets to the core of the message -- because it IS the message! How can one preach the Bible without preaching the Bible? Would you search the scriptures without searching the scriptures? This is like telling a young person to learn to drive but don't get behind the wheel! Proof text preaching is really nothing more than the use of biblical texts to teach what God wants taught in the words with which God wants it taught (I Corinthians 2:10-13).

It is true that some "proof texts" have not been proof texts at all but have been taken out of context. This can be done if one is not careful in what he is doing. However, rather than objecting to proof text preaching because some have abused the practice, why not show us how to correctly get the job done? Paul and Peter wrote concerning people who perverted the Bible

(Galatians 1:6-9; II Corinthians 2:17; II Peter 3:16), but neither of these men had a negative view of proof text preaching!

It might be of some benefit to consider just who would object to proof text preaching and why they would voice such objection:

1. The religiously prejudiced reject proof texts because their religious error is exposed by the truth.

2. The religiously compromised reject proof text style preaching because such teaching will not be tolerant of error.

3. The morally deficient reject proof texting because Bible texts teach a moral absolute.

4. Those unskillful in the use of the Bible will not put up with proof texting preaching because of their limited ability to use the Bible so skillfully themselves! It is really jealousy toward skilled Bible teachers rather than hatred of proof texts that lies at the bottom of this class of objection!

5. One who has no faith in the power of the word of God to accomplish the Lord's purpose will not be likely to appreciate proof text

preaching.

6. A person who has no faith that the Bible is the inspired word of God will not tolerate proof texts, because he sees no validity in the text, anyway.

7. People who have lost their love for the "old worn out lessons" of the past will not heed proof texts. How sad that these folks think the old message is no longer a needed lesson!

8. Liberals and modernists who reject the absolute authority of the Bible will resist proof text teaching.

From all that we have said above, I hope that we can be made more aware of letting

the Bible speak to us as it is instead of pressing meanings into it that were never intended. Only by "proof text" preaching -- which is nothing more than "thus saith the Lord" -- we get the job done today. Just what source will they use who do not use the texts of the Bible? What kind of preaching can be done without the use of texts from the Bible? How can one call himself a gospel preacher if he does not turn strictly to the words of the gospel to appeal to his hearers? And if Bible proof texts are not used, then what will the audience be hearing? This is serious business!

--P.O. Box 166, Boaz, Alabama 35957.

Christ's Church

Continued From Page 2

of their testimony, he adds to the church day by day those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). He continues building his church, forming a holy temple and habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22), laying living stone upon living stone (I Peter 2:5-7).

BLOOD-BOUGHT. The church of the Lord was purchased with Christ's own blood (Acts 20:28).

A young boy put many hours into his first artistic project, a boat carved out of wood with much effort and careful attention to detail. While sailing it in a stream temporarily swollen from recent rains, he lost the boat. Very keenly he felt the loss. That boat was the first thing he had ever made alone, with his own hands, and he loved it.

After weeks of grieving, he saw it one day. Another boy was playing with it. The other boy admitted finding it, but was not willing to give it up. "Finders keepers," he claimed.

After negotiations, the finder of the boat agreed to sell it to its maker. It took all of the lad's savings, but he loved his boat; so he purchased it. Taking it home, he kissed his boat, hugged it close and said, "You are mine; I made you and I bought you. You are twice mine."

So with Christ, the church.

HELL-PROOF. "The gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against her" (Matthew 16:18). It is a kingdom made without hands, which can never be destroyed (Matthew 16:19; Daniel 2:44).

The power of death could not prevent God from putting Christ on the throne. He raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand.

The word of God will endure (I Peter 1:23-25); therefore, so will the church. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:10-11). Whenever and wherever the gospel is preached and honest souls receive it in obedient faith, there is the church.

The church suffered persecution even to death, but death has not prevailed against her. The dead in Christ will be raised, the mortal and corruptible will be changed into the immortal and incorruptible. Death will be swallowed up in victory (I Corinthians 15:53-54). Hades and the grave will be cast into hell. Death cannot overcome the church. The faithful church will conquer death.

The church militant on earth will share fully in that victory as the church triumphant in heaven.

--P.O. Box 1109, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

Should Women Be Serving The Lord's Supper In Our Assemblies?

Continued From Page 3

and, the custom of the day would suggest, probably reclining on something akin to a couch.

Very possibly, in New Testament times no one performed the precise task about which our questioners inquire.

A missionary told of a society in which women served the men the loaf and cup precisely because in their culture it would have been a serious violation of man's headship for them to serve the women.

If that has any validity (and,

if the facts are as were stated, it seems to me it does) then whether a given action is submitting or exercising authority is determined partly by the culture in which it occurs.

It seems to me that standing before the congregation, and walking the aisles dispensing communion, is a leadership function among us. As we groom young men for church leadership, we "start them out" in just that way.

Certainly, a woman may "pass the trays" to the next person as they come down the

pew or line of chairs in which she sits. Undoubtedly, a woman may get up to hand a tray over to the pew across the aisle, or to the first occupied pew three pews behind her.

Are those things the same thing as lining up before the congregation to pass the emblems?

No. Surely they are not.

If it is a leadership position in worship, then I Timothy 2:8-13 says that men should do it, not women.

November 6, 1992

See Inside Articles:

- Commandment For Contentment
 - 'Where Is The Bank'
 - Express Yourself!
- Tribute -- Johnnia Holder
- Parents Teaching Morality Is The Only Solution
 - God Bless My Baby
 - Evidence Of Love

Volume 28 Number 45

(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

Gary Colley

It is one thing to read the text of the Bible but quite another to understand or comprehend! When one understands, it means that he has a grasp of what is meant and therefore has gained knowledge. The Gospel is God's powerful and only means of saving the world (Romans 1:16). The purpose of teaching and preaching the Gospel to the world was and is to help all to understand God's will, given to and for lost man. Good teachers and preachers all must learn this principle to be successful in their work! Phillip knew this basic fact when he said to the treasurer of Candace queen of the Ethiopians, "understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30).

One Must Hear

Some today contend that we do not need to hear a preacher, or even the word of God in order to understand and be saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-10). But the Ephesian Christians who were saved by grace, before being able to believe and to trust in the Lord, had to hear and understand "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13). Paul had already stated that "faith cometh by hearing" the word of God (Romans 10:17). Not only did they have to hear and understand the basics of the Gospel to obey and be saved, but also Paul commanded them for their successful

future as Christians, "See then that ye walk (live GC) circumspectly (carefully GC), not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). Thus, in this manner they were saved by the Gospel, in the grace of God! (Cf. Romans 1:16; Titus 2:11-12).

One Must Understand

Others say that one does not have to understand even the purpose of baptism in order to acceptably "obey the Gospel" for salvation and to enter the church of Christ. But Jesus the master teacher said of those under His preaching who rejected understanding, "lest at any time they should hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15). Before one can have pardon and salvation, according to our Lord and King, he must understand the message!

The Eunuch Did Hear And Understand

In answer to the eunuch's question, "How can I (understand GC), except some man should guide me," Phillip then taught him and answered his questions. He thereby brought him to a "knowledge of the truth," or understanding! (I Timothy 2:4). It was only then that he could say, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be

baptized?" (Acts 8:36). He now understood God's gracious plan revealed in the Gospel and wanted to obey in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism! Upon making the good confession, the confession upon which Jesus built His church (Matthew

16:16-18; I Corinthians 3:11), that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," they stopped the chariot and both went "down into the water" and the eunuch was baptized by the authority of Heaven, into Christ. Then and only then could the eunuch go "on his way rejoicing" in the

forgiveness of his sins!

All who have a correct understanding of God's scheme of redemption today must do the same! "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

--1605 Martin Hill Dr.,
Tupelo, MS 38801.

"I Would Love To Have Some Dirty Dishes!"

Don Williams

"Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb in his reward. As arrows are in hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them": (Psalm 127:3-5). Within these verses, God talks about the blessings that are ours because of the children whom he blesses us with. Wonderful is a house, filled with the sounds of laughter, joy, crayon markings on the wall, etc. They speak of life that is theirs, a life you gave them as it came from God. Within our kids we see the hope for the future -- they will bear our name for years to come. They may live out the dreams we have for them -- they will be the church of tomorrow, as well as help work in the church of today. **THEY ARE OUR FUTURE!**

I was recently reminded of this in a very sad and sobering manner. On Monday night,

the class "Understanding the Loss of a Loved One" began. We had fourteen present, and believe that it will continue to grow. Each of these adults had had "significant losses" within their lives, some of them most recently. As we were talking of the pain and the shock that goes into the handling of grief, the point was being made that now often you do things alone. A mate is no longer there, or a child that brightened the home's presence has died. Somewhere, in the discussion, one lady, who has endured two losses in her family, including the recent loss of her husband, said, "sometimes I would love to have dirty dishes again."

What did she mean? Dirty dishes represented people -- family members who were present within the home. It represented the presence of loving people around her again. For her, it was no more. I thought of this again, as this morning, I was after one of

my sons to clean up his room. Running out of time, he had to leave it until later. My wife taught me another lesson, when she simply said, "there are some things more important than a clean room." I thought to myself, "the lady last night would sure love to have a dirty room in her house again." Cleanliness is important, but children are far more important. Love them -- hold them close -- teach them while we can -- one day they will be gone.

My wife shared with me a poem written years ago by a unknown author. We would do well to heed its message:

Thank God For Dirty Dishes
They Have A Tale To Tell.
While Other Folks Go Hungry,
We're Faring Very Well --
With Home And Health
And Happiness,
Why Should We Want To Fuss?
For By This Stack
Of Evidence --
God's Been Very Good To Us!
--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL
35563.

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Commandment For Contentment

Human relationships are such a basic and important facet of our Christianity. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and they neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27). It's no wonder that God's word has so much to say about how we treat people around us. Forget this teaching and you rob yourself of countless hours of contentment and replace them with anger and grief. Forget these words of our Lord, and the church wearing His name will ever be wounded and bleeding from brothers and sisters who can't stand the sight of one another. For Christians and churches who are ignoring this teaching evangelism is choked to

death. What are the "revolutionary" teachings of our Lord that lubricate the gears of human relationships? Read and glean:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; . . . "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

Matthew 5:44, 46

"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But

if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

Matthew 18:15-17

"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 this brother also."

I John 4:20-21

'Where Is The Bank'

By Elwood Holt

A few years ago a blind man drowned in a lake. He swam around in circles until he was exhausted. "Where is the bank? Where's the bank?" he kept shouting after he and a fisherman companion were dumped into the lake when their skiff capsized. A young boy, 16, heard his frantic cries, "Where is the bank?" and swam toward him, only to see him disappear when he was almost in reach.

I know you must have read or heard of a story similar to this. It is a heart-wringing story, true in every respect, and indicative again of the fact that tragedy indeed stalks our land by day and by night. The grim reaper never sleeps. Some are summoned even while they sleep and drift off into eternity. Some are victims of causes other than natural. It seems so unnecessary for one

to drown as the victim of our story did. It is especially sad to learn of a blind man drowning.

But, friends, people all about in the religious world are swimming in circles. They are perishing in the destructive currents of sin, and their cries of "where is the bank?" can often be heard, but the sad fact remains that thousands upon thousands are dying by the day who are not prepared to stand before God. It is our duty to "throw out the life-line" that the perishing might be rescued. Some are perishing who do not know it. They think they are going to make the distant shore, but too late they will find that their strength has given out and they will be lost. Too many are trusting in their own strength, not the strength of the Lord. We are told to "trust in the Lord with all our heart,"

(Proverbs 3:5). We are not to trust in ourselves. We are told again to "put on the whole armour of the Lord," (Ephesians 6:11). The verse preceding says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might." In the Lord we find strength. Man left to himself is weak. Jesus said, "For without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

There are many who are following blind leaders. Yes, there are still men in the world who are in the business of deceiving the children of men. But, following a blind guide in all sincerity is just as bad as following him with both eyes wide-open to the fact that he is a blind guide. Jesus said, "And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into the pit" (Matthew 15:14). Being blind won't keep them out of

Continued On Page 3

Express Yourself!

T. Pierce Brown

I have written letters similar to the one below to Editors of newspapers all over the United States. Many publish them. Many more would publish such letters if they were written by residents of the area in which the paper is published. Why is it that more Christians do not take a stand and write to your editor about things that matter? You may not be able to write an article that would be published by most of our brotherhood publications, but you can at least let your editor know what you stand for. Thousands will read it that will never read a gospel paper. It will more readily be published if typed and double spaced, but I am persuaded if thousands of able Christians would make such an effort it would make a significant difference.

Dear Editor,

Our founding fathers knew many things most of us do not. Among them is the fact that the majority are most often wrong. That is one reason they made this nation a republic instead of a democracy. They knew that Noah was in the minority, but only he and his family were saved. They knew that Lot and his family were in the minority, for most of Sodom and Gomorrah approved of homosexuality. The Sodomites were destroyed (Genesis 19:25). They knew that the majority of the pagans of Rome and Greece believed it was proper to abort their

unwanted children, and to leave their girl babies out in the cold to starve, freeze or be eaten by wild beasts. But they also knew that both Rome and Greece fell, as will all other nations who approve of immoral principles, whether it is murdering the Jews as Hitler did or murdering unborn babies and approving other immoral life styles as we do.

They also knew that the majority can change over trifles. The crowd that shouted to make Christ king was largely the same crowd that shouted "Crucify Him" (Mark 15:14). Sadly, that does not prove that the majority is right. It only proves that truth is truth whether or not anyone accepts it. The only solution to the problem is not in taking a vote to see who is right, but to go to the Divine standard, God's Word, for the principles upon which any enduring society must be founded. David said it properly in Psalm 33:12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." This does not mean we should have a state religion. It means that the governors and the governed should believe in the principles of right and wrong which are defined by God's rules. "One nation under God" is still in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, but will probably be removed in the next administration if our nation continues in its present direction.



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Parents Teaching Morality Is The Only Solution

Gerald Elliott

Christians cannot expect the media or government to make a case for morality, honesty, and integrity. As these are basic Christian issues, it is a basic Christian responsibility. As parents have a God given responsibility to make sure their children are moral and honest it is parents who must teach their children the values of morality, honesty, and integrity.

Parenting is harder today than when most parents were children. Yesterday's society was less diverse, values were much more clear. Expectations of the general population were basically moral and righteous. While "The Cleavers" might not have really existed, a large part of the population came close to being real life "Cleavers."

Christian families survived in other times when society did not support moral values. The New Testament age is our best example. The Roman world was debased. Decadence was the norm. The term "Roman orgy" is still used to

describe "no-holds-barred sexual parties." Christian parents teaching their children there was a better way of life, changed that world. It can and must happen again.

It is a tragic thing that Magic Johnson and millions of others are HIV positive. It is also tragic that almost all people who have AIDS or are HIV positive were involved in some immoral activity when they contracted this terrible infection. The very large majority, more than 90% of those who have AIDS were infected from homosexual relations, fornication, or intravenous drug usage.

Today, modern medicine can successfully treat syphilis and gonorrhea with penicillin. But these sexually transmitted diseases continue to be a major health problem because of two things: One, infected people refusing to be treated and the other is continuing sexual activity while infected. Knowing how to medically solve the problem has not stopped this problem.

Some people have been infected innocently with this

deadly virus. With continued precautions, the numbers so infected will also drop. Hopefully, a medical cure for this disease will soon be discovered. Before a cure is found, AIDS could be controlled with morality. Each of us can stay free from this disease with almost complete certainty by making moral choices.

God loves all people. He takes no pleasure in suffering regardless of who it is that suffers. His Will, faithfully

followed would eliminate many of the diseases and much of the pain we see around us. As long as people continue in immorality, finding a cure for AIDS will not eliminate that disease.

Parents, teach your children to be moral. Teach them to be moral, that is sexually abstinent, until marriage. Tell them to marry someone who has done the same. Teach them that faithfulness in marriage is worthwhile spiritually and also sound medically.



Tribute -- Johnnia Holder

On October 16, Johnnia Holder passed from this life after a lengthy bout with cancer. She and her husband Lee have been faithful members of the Adamsville Church of Christ for many years. Sister Holder was the sister of Bobby Duncan, Clifford Smith, and Billie Lee Smith. She was the mother of three daughters and one son, all Christians. She was also the mother-in-law of Blake Nicholas, Scotty Sparks, (who both preach for the Salem Church in Florence), and Glenn Colley. This family rose up to pay fitting tribute to this Christian woman at a funeral service on October 17. Five preachers spoke including her brother, her three sons-in-law, and Tim Rice from Adamsville. The large crowd praised God with congregational singing. Sister Holder will be greatly missed.

Sister Holder made a great impact on many lives through the Bible classes that she taught at Adamsville. Her godly Christian influence will continue to permeate the lives of her family and friends. She will be greatly missed by the family of God.

'Where Is The Bank'

Continued From Page 2

the pit any more than being blind kept the young man out of the destructive current. To follow the blind guides is to perish with them. It is sad to see so many who are steeped in sin, who are holding to tradition instead of the word of God, who are adding to what the Lord says we should do, who are walking by human opinion, their own philosophies, who are putting their own plans before doing the Lord's will, and all the while not knowing that they are perishing. But such is often the case. Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13). Foreign plants just

will not be allowed to live in the Lord's garden. Being nearly right isn't sufficient. One must be right all the way. The Lord's will is plain, and men would do well to stop and consider it seriously. It isn't enough to take the preacher's word without personal investigation. The right kind of preacher doesn't want you to do that. He wants you to investigate and learn for yourself.

In the judgment countless souls, blinded by sin, will cry out, "Where is the bank? -- Oh, where is the bank! Please, where is the bank?" But it will be too late then. Let the word of God do the talking because it is truth (John 17:17).

God Bless My Baby

By Cindy Colley

God, give him strength as he enters our lives.
Give us wisdom as parents as each of us strives
To make for him places in our world to grow.
Teach us, Lord. We're so small. There's so much we don't know.

God bless him, as he, to Thy wonders awakes.
Bless him, dear Lord, as his first steps he takes.
He's so small. May his scratches and bruises be small.
May a kiss "make it better" each time he may fall.

Lord, help me to guide him and help him to grow.
Then go with him, Father, where I cannot go.
When he goes off to school, calm his baby-sized fears;
And remember to dry all my mother-sized tears.

And help him to learn there just what he should know
To take him, in life, where he wants to go.
But in all of the learning, may he never forget
The One Who has made him, and is keeping him yet.

Give him courage when Satan first gets in his way.
May he stay near Thy word. May he look up and pray.
May he put on Thee, Lord, is my most fervent prayer;
And, for all of his days, cast on Thee every care.

And when the time comes, that he must go away,
Help me to let go . . . but still I will pray;
God bless my baby, look down from Thy throne
And keep him from harm, for still he's my own.

Give him shelter, dear Lord, from this world's restless storm;
In a place where your love shines . . . a place that is warm.
Give him people who'd help him keep you in his life.
Give him one of your children, Oh Lord, for his wife.

And one day, may they know the joy I now feel
Of a life, yet unborn, but so precious and real.
May something I give him, while still he is mine
Make him know that the life, even unborn, is Thine.

So Father, my prayer is for a life you're now giving
And yes, for a soul that will always be living.
My task is so great. I'm so small. Help me see
That through Christ I can do it . . . for He strengthens me.

Evidence Of Love

WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES?



Gus Nichols

Voice From The Past --

(Editor's Note): Brother Nichols published this article for the Words Of Truth on Jan. 15, 1971. The truths found here have not tarnished, and are just as applicable in 1992.

Glenn Colley

Let us seriously think about love. However, someone is ready to say, "Why think about such a dry theme? Why not consider something important and timely?" Well, love is the most important and timely theme in the whole Bible. It is the very hub of the wheel of the gospel (John 3:16). Paul declares that love is greater than faith, important as faith is, and that it is more important than hope, and we are also saved by hope (I Corinthians 13:13; Romans 8).

We must love God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds and strength (Matthew 22:37-39; Luke 10:25-37). This means we must love God with all the powers of our being -- love God supremely and put him first in our hearts and lives.

We must also love Jesus, the Son of God and make a total commitment unto him (I Corinthians 16:22). All mankind should and must love God and His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Christ also loves us, and loved us so much that he died for us when we were his enemies (Romans 5:5-12; Colossians 1:20-22; II Corinthians 5:12-16). It is no strange thing, therefore, that we should be required to love Jesus in order to be Christians.

But how may we know that we love God? What are the certain and unmistakable evidences of our love for God and for his Son? We cannot know just by our feelings, for feelings are often deceptive. Some of the most wicked and rebellious characters known unto us are deceived in this matter. They will say, "Why, of course, I love God," while right then they are in the depths of sin and shame. As a rule all sinners who believe in God would claim to love him, and so of all backsliders. With their lips they claim to love the Lord. They say they love Jesus, and they claim to be friends of God and friends of Christ. But do they really love him? Are they his friends?

Jesus says, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). Are you keeping the commandments of Jesus? Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ? (I Peter 4:17; Romans 10:16). Are you now keeping the commandments of Jesus? He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Again, someone may say he loves Jesus but has not gotten around to keeping his commandments. But Jesus again says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). Someone may say "I know I love and I am not even trying to keep his commandments." But this is a deception on your part. Jesus says again, "If a man love me he will keep my words" (John 14:23). "Well, says one, "I know I am not keeping his commandments, but some way I know in my heart that I love Jesus." But hear Jesus again, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:24).

It follows then, that none love Jesus except those who are faithful Christians and who are keeping his commandments. Those who refuse to obey the gospel don't love Jesus. Neither do church

members who refuse to attend the services of the church. Nor, those who fail to worship as it is written. No backslider loves Jesus who wants to be restored and forgiven, without confessing his sins before the church, which knows of his sins of negligence, and willful refusal to worship and refusal to help to build up the church. One of the Lord's commandments is to attend the services of the church (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 11:26; I Corinthians 14:23).

Of course, God does not require those physically, or mentally unable to come to do so. But God knows the difference in mere lying-excuses and in real inability to attend. God knows who wants to attend and cannot, and those who do not want to come and worship, and are offering excuses instead of loving obedience. God knows those who are unable to sing, and unable to give, and unable to read the Bible, and those unable to teach others, and those unable to invite and bring others to the services. Yes, and God knows the other crowd, too.

SOME OTHER EVIDENCES

1. We love to think of those we love - and often cherish lovely thoughts about them. It makes us happy to think of them. Does it make you happy to think of God and his Son? Or, are your thought of God and Christ a sort of terrifying experience? Do you entertain the thoughts that God is angry with you, and is chalking up all your sins against you, and perhaps just seeking some sort of a pretext to damn you in a devil's hell forever? Do you love to think of God? Do all your thoughts of God make you happy?

2. We also seek to please those who we love. The loving husband seeks to please his wife in all that is right and scriptural (I Corinthians 7). And the wife seeks to thus please her husband. Yes, and all who love God seek to please him.

Even Christ did not please himself, but the Father, even to the giving of his life for us (Romans 15:1-3; Philippians 2:5-11; I Peter 3:18-21). Those who love God seek to please the Lord. ("Will the thing please the Lord?" (Micah 6:6-7). Are you a member of the church which pleases the Lord, or one seeking to please the people, regardless of the will of God? (Galatians 6:10; Matthew 7:21; I John 2:17). Jesus came to do the will of the Father, not his own will (John 6:38). He loved his Father. Do we love him? Do we seek above all things to please God? His will is in the New Testament.

3. We are happy to be with those whom we love. It made you happy for the children to come during the holidays, and you enjoyed being with them, for you love them. Do you love to be with the Lord? Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30). God is with us only so long as we abide in his doctrine (II John 9; Matthew 28:20). Do we love to meet with the Lord in worship? He is never absent from scriptural worship (Matthew 18:20).

4. We love to listen to those whom we love -- we like to hear them talk. We do not stop our ears when they want to say something to us, as in the case of sweethearts. They love to hear every word. Do we love to hear God talk? He only talks to us in the Bible (John 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-2; Nehemiah 9:30; II Timothy 3:15-17). Do we love to read the Bible and to hear God talk? Do we listen?

5. We also love to talk to those whom we love. Do we love to talk to God in prayer? There is no other way for us to talk to him (Ephesians 3:14-21; I Thessalonians 5:17-18). Are we on speaking terms with God? Do we pray? Often? Do we love God?

6. We have an abiding concern for the things of those whom we love. We are interested in their interests.

Are we concerned about the church, and the things of God? Do we care whether or not his gospel is preached unto every creature in the world? Do we love the things of God? Are we interested in his Cause? Do we care whether or not the church grows and prospers? Jesus loved the church (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28). Do we love it? Are we Christ-like?

7. We love those who are loved by one whom we love. Do we love the children of God? John tells us that if we love God who has begotten his children, we will love those also who are begotten of him (I John 5:1-14). Do we love our brethren, begotten of God? (James 1:18; I Corinthians 4:15) Do we love them enough to wish to be with them in worship? DO WE LOVE GOD? DO WE LOVE JESUS? If not, we are in sin and lost and should be greatly alarmed concerning our lost condition. Remember, love is the greatest thing in the world (I Corinthians 13:13).

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Have The Time?

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The Words Of Truth

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

the

'But What About Grace'

Winfred Clark

The above mentioned title is often the response of people to the discussion of some Bible topic. Often the grace of God is made to oppose such things as obedience and the like. But that is clearly not the case. God has never intended for his grace to set aside one of his commands. His grace is not to be set in opposition to other matters that relate to salvation.

Men need to see in this sort of discussion, as well as in others, that more than one sacred principle can be involved in the salvation of man. We need to be able to see that we can emphasize one thing and that such emphasis does not eliminate other matters. We can see this in other areas. If you were speaking of a crop that had been harvested, you could say "the rain that we had surely made that crop." You would not be saying that such things as seed, soil and fertilizer were not equally important. That sort of thing should be understood. We would take that for granted. This same sort of thing is also true in the realm of the spiritual. When one emphasizes faith, he is not ruling out repentance or other things necessary to the salvation of man.

I. BUT WHAT ABOUT GRACE AND LAW?

Does the grace of God rule out the law of God? Are these things mutually exclusive? Does one cancel out the

other? Can they coexist? Can you have the grace of God and the law of God at the same time? To the minds of many people such is not possible. But that should not be a problem, if we will just let the Bible settle the matter. One will surely have no conflict if the Bible is allowed to settle the matter.

What about law and grace in the case of Noah? Could both be present at the same time? As you open your Bible to the book of Genesis you will find the following, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth;" (Genesis 6:5-7). With this decision man surely faced a terrible plight. He was about to be destroyed. As we read further we will notice, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). Here we are introduced to the word grace. So there can be no question but that the grace of God is seen to be present in God's dealings with Noah. One would have to doubt inspiration to doubt this. He would have to go contrary to the facts. But we need to look at another verse or two in this same chapter. For example, "God said unto Noah . . . Make thee an ark of gopher

wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without" (Genesis 6:13-14). Now as you read this would you conclude that Noah faced anything like unto a law, a rule of action, or a command? Did not God legislate how the ark was to be constructed? Did he not have certain commandments to obey? Were there not some rules that needed to be followed? Surely all of us would agree that such was the case. But would such rule out the matter of grace? Remember that this record is written by Moses after the fact. Yet, nowhere in inspiration do we find that grace ruled out the law that God gave, nor do we find where the law that God gave would rule out the grace of God. As Noah followed God's law he would be delivered from the flood. That is the way he would benefit from the grace of God. His doing what God told him to do would not be something of merit. It would still be a matter of grace. So there is absolutely no conflict between the two. So if one were to ask "but what about grace," we would have no trouble showing that grace did not conflict with what Noah was told to do.

II. BUT WHAT ABOUT GRACE AND BAPTISM?

So many times people have a problem when the subject of baptism arises. It shouldn't be but often it is. Surely it is not because of what the Bible has to say on the subject. It is

plain and simple. I allows himself influenced by fe religious opinions might have a problem. There is absolutely no conflict between grace and baptism. To say that one is saved by grace and at the same time saved by baptism is no problem. If it is a problem then the Bible has that problem. Take a look. Paul, by inspiration says, "for by grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:8). That is a plain statement of fact. But listen to the apostle Peter, "even baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21). Now here are two clear and concise statements from men who were apostles of Christ. Men that were inspired. One says we are saved by grace and the other says by baptism. Are they in conflict? Absolutely not, for both are directed by the Holy Spirit. If one concludes that one cannot be saved by grace and at the same time saved by baptism, then he surely must admit that there is a conflict. If one cannot be saved by grace and saved by baptism at the same time then you place two apostles in conflict with one another. Was the teaching of Paul opposed to the teaching of Peter? It would have to be if one cannot be saved by grace and baptism at the same time.

There is also another dilemma that one would be forced to face. Remember that these men were writing by inspiration. That means the

Holy Spirit was directing what being written. If one not be saved by baptism grace at the same time, then this would place the Holy Spirit in conflict with himself. For if one can rule out baptism's relationship to salvation because he can read where one is saved by grace, then he can rule out what the Holy Spirit had to say about baptism. But if you can rule out what the Holy Spirit had to say about baptism, then what is to keep you from ruling out what the Holy Spirit had to say about grace? The same Spirit inspired both Paul and Peter to write what they wrote.

Would Paul agree with Peter about what he wrote? Would Peter agree with Paul about what he wrote? You say, "I am sure they would agree." Then one can be saved by baptism and at the same time saved by grace. When Jesus said, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," he did not mean one was not saved by grace, but rather he was telling him how to be saved by grace. It was grace that told him how and made provisions for such.

III. BUT WHAT ABOUT GRACE AND WORKS?

So many times men are influenced by religious thought around them. They hear men speaking of one being saved without works and to them it means all kinds

Continued On Page 3

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

"1998"

Dale Jenkins

Her name in english would be Anna. She is a super athlete and has received numerous decorations for her accomplishments. I'd estimate her age at 20. She was one of the girls who was in my class during a three week trip to Russia and the Ukraine. On our last day before leaving she brought me a "gift," as did most of the students. It's a Ukrainian tradition. Her gift stands out in my mind with about three or four others. I have a number of her medals and decorations from the Russian empire (it seems they are no longer of any value to her). I gratefully accepted these, but the "gift" that most impressed me was her Communist Card. To be a member of the Communist party you had to have a card and pay a "tax" each month to be correct. This card allowed you to work, purchase a place to live, get food, etc. So the gift was special. It sits on my desk now serving as a constant reminder of three or four things:

Obviously each time I see the card it reminds me of the souls in this far off country searching for God and Christ. People who were "shackled" in darkness for decades who now are turning to Jesus as the answer to their life messes in the masses. It is something to put a face with the souls: Valentina, Victoria, Alexander, Olga, Oleg, Dima, Starus-real people who need Christ.

As much as that, as I have examined this little book which was to be stamped in

allegiance to the Communist party each month, I am reminded of how things of man and his devices are not permanent. Anna was issued her card in November of 1989. The book was to continue through 2010, in fact the years are already numbered through 1998. But the stamps abruptly discontinued in November 1990. This small book, most important to the "mighty" communist party reminds me that even the invincible things of men are feathers in the sight of God. Our greatest obstacle to world evangelism, God seems to be saying, is as nothing! I guess we need to know the next time we say, we would do such and such good work . . . except that, with God there are no exceptions. "The things impossible with man are not impossible with God."

There's a third lesson that this little red book on my desk reminds me of daily. That is of the necessity of repentance. When Anna ceased communism she turned loose of even it's most powerful stronghold. The thing that proved that she was a communist served as a gift to a foreigner. The statement is vivid, "I am no longer under communist authority." When we become Christians, we become citizens of a new order and a new world. The old man of sin is cast aside. The act of baptism serves as proof that we are no longer under satan's authority (Romans 6).

--Hamilton, AL.

I Must Not Forget To Exhort Them

How many times in life have you started something with excitement and fervor only to later find the task was harder than you expected? Such is often the case with Christians young in the faith. Christianity demands perennial persistence -- "Keep on keeping on." That's not easy. Falling away from Christ's body permanently, however, has devastating results: "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (II Peter 2:21).

Hebrews 3:12-14 reads, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened thru the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

We learn the following important lessons from this text:

1. A CHRISTIAN CAN DEPART FROM GOD.

This verse clearly disproves the false doctrine called the "Impossibility of apostacy." This point flashes a danger sign. Here's what can happen. Preachers, teachers, elders and parents need to be instilling the fearful terror of departing from God. Romans 8:38 says that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. But,

I may shun His love and depart from Him.

People need to be reminded that while departing from God here may sadly seem to produce little life change, (They still work, live, eat, drink, etc) the difference in eternity will be unspeakable. We are never completely without God's blessing here on earth (Matthew 5:45), but no one in hell will benefit one whit from God's goodness.

2. THE PROTECTION AGAINST THIS APOSTACY IS TO "EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY."

Christians strengthen other Christians. Just as ball teams do better with the "Home team advantage," so Christians are fed with the exhortation of other Christians. Exhort means to build up, motivate, push forward in that which is right. Who should exhort Christians? Elders should (Titus 1:9). Preachers should (II Timothy 4:1-4). Fellow Christians should (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Barnabas taught us this by his marvelous example. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:22-24).

3. WE ARE REACHING

FOR THE ULTIMATE PRIZE.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

In this verse we find hope, motivation, and warning. Our hope is that we will one day begin eternity with Christ in the house not made with hands. Our motivation, is to do right according to the One who has revealed to us the difference between right and wrong. We are warned that we will miss the promises of Christ if we don't hold steadfastly to the end. I Peter 1:9 says, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Exhorting our brothers and sisters sounds easy, but it's often not easy. It requires boldness in Christ, a cause bigger than ourselves, and a love for others strong enough to sometimes risk jeopardizing our relationship by speaking with them about their spiritual wellbeing.

Let's all reexamine our hearts and the walls which prevent us from being exhorters in things people need to hear. If I'm failing to speak to another about spiritual concerns, what is my reasoning? Is it really valid, or should I be swallowing my pride and speaking loving exhortation to that individual? Chances are that you became a Christian because someone, somewhere, didn't forget the tremendous importance of being an exhorter.

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"The Wolf Shall Dwell With The Lamb"

By Gary Colley

During a recent Gospel meeting it was requested that we have a question and answer period during each service. This was the general practice of former years and we rejoice to see those interested in its return. It is beneficial to those whose questions are answered by the Bible and in understanding the thoughts of the audience and their needs.

One question answered concerned the prophetic words of Isaiah 11:6-7, "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and

the lion shall eat straw like the ox." The question was, to what does this refer? Is it literal language?

The rationalist and premillennialist refer to this literally as what will happen in the "coming millennial period," or that perhaps it has already literally happened in the time of Isaiah. Evidently they think, in some unknown way to us, this would be beneficial to mankind for the wolf to dwell with the lamb literally, etc., but when asked of what possible benefit this could be to man they have no answer.

Clearly, this beautiful and figurative language is to be understood as prophetic. The several metaphors and allegories are spoken while looking forward to the rule of Christ.

The lessons pictured of peace in the kingdom of Christ are to be learned from these rich truths.

The wolf is known for being an uneasy, ravenous animal, which attacks the sheepfold! The lamb is usually devoured by the wolf. The leopard follows or stalks a kid in order to overcome and finally kill. It is a known fact that the lion, the king of the beast, is able to kill and carry away an ox. For these to "dwell" or "lie down" together would represent one of the greatest of changes in the known practices of these animals.

From the context we understand that the Messiah is described as the "rod out of the stock of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1) which shows that He is from the Royal Family of David, son of Jesse. Centuries

later Christ came, as also predicted in Micah 5:2. These figures represented men who conducted their lives like these animals.

Then is given the description of the Kingdom where men who formerly acted like wild beast, as Saul of Tarsus, would grow tame, with peace and harmony resulting in Christ, in the church! "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). This corresponds with Jesus giving of the Great Commission and saying in the Sermon on the Mount, "the meek shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5), that

is by their teaching. Even the angels said at his birth, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). Among those who formerly were as dangerous as deadly reptiles, after conversion and entering the Kingdom, became the most harmless and are safe, because of the wonderful effects of the Gospel in the hearts of men under our Savior's rule (Romans 6:16-18).

We exhort all who have not entered the Kingdom by obedience (John 3:5) to obtain these blessings for themselves!

Going On To Spiritual Growth!

By Don Williams

As a normal baby grows in weight, height, and knowledge, so also a Christian should mature and grow spiritually. In I Peter 2:2, Peter exhorts, "as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Just as a baby must have milk and later baby food for its physical development, so we must crave and earnestly desire to feed upon the word of God for our spiritual growth.

Our goal as Christians is to become more and more spiritually-minded. In Romans 8:6, Paul declares this when he writes, "for to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." There are folks who live long, active lives, who never really know what life is about. They never enjoy the true peace that is found only in Jesus. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our

Continued On Page 4

"But What About Grace?"

Continued From Page 1

of works. It means all works are ruled out when it comes to one being saved.

This sort of an idea would say that works would be meritorious. They cannot see anything done in being saved to be other than a work of merit.

But can a man do something and that thing not be a work of merit? Can a man do something and yet still be saved by the grace of God? Take a look at Acts chapter 2. Here is a case where the apostles were preaching and we know this preaching was directed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). When those folks asked "men and brethren what shall we do?", they were given an answer. Now did that answer have to do with something they were to do? Isn't that what they asked? Did the apostles answer the question that they asked? Your answer would be that they did. They were told to do two things. They were to "repent" and they were told to "be baptized." These were things they were to do. In that sense

these are works or things to do. Of this there can be no doubt. Now would you think any of these people could be saved without doing what the apostles told them to do? Do you know of any that were saved on that day that did not do what they were told to do? Could they be saved without doing what they were told to do? Your answer would be absolutely not. They would have to do what they were instructed to do. But that would involve works would it not? It would be something done. We know that some did what they were told to do (Acts 2:4-41). We know also they were saved (Acts 2:47). So we do not doubt for a moment that these who did something were saved. That goes without question. We know they were saved because they did what the apostles had told them to do. That would assure them of being saved. Now, stop and ask yourself a question. Were these people saved by grace? You would say, "I am sure they were saved by grace."

But, didn't they do something that they were told to do? You would agree that they did do something. Would their doing something rule out grace? You would say, "no not at all." Then there is no conflict between grace and works. That is the case here and in every case where a man is saved.

When men say, "But what about grace?", we can see what they really mean, but when we take the Bible we can see there is no conflict between grace and law, nor grace and baptism, nor grace and works. But when we take the word of man it is otherwise.

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"The Most Of A Minute"

True wisdom comes in this life only when we reach the place where we recognize the Bible as the single, most important, paramount guide for the lives of men. Face it -- When all is said and done the only real success in life is in living such a way that God is pleased with us. Other successes pale into nothingness when compared with this one.

Woodrow Wilson, our 20th president once said, "The Bible is the word of life. I beg you will read it and find this out for yourself -- read, not little snatches here and there, but long passages that will really be the road to the heart of it. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty!"

How can I achieve the true success -- the approval of God? II Timothy 2:15 -- "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth."

Confusing Voices

Elwood Holt

A man was walking along the highway in the cool of the evening and saw a big drove of hogs, with ears pricked up, running first one way and then another, and seeming to be terribly confused. He could not understand what the trouble was with them. Presently he came to a little farm house and stopped to inquire of an old man sitting on the porch.

"Mister, are those your hogs up there in the wood pasture?" "Yes, those are my shoats," replied the man. "Well, there is something wrong with those hogs -- they are running first one way and then another, with their heads and ears up."

"Oh, I'll tell you what is the matter," he said. "You see, it is about feeding time. Before I lost my voice I would take a basket of corn up there and give a call or two, and they came rushing to me, but since I've lost my voice, I just take my cane and knock on a tree, and when they hear me, they come rushing to eat. But for the last week or two the woodpeckers have been getting out on a dry limb, and when the hogs hear them, they think it is my knock and get

confused."

Now friends, there is a moral to that story. People are running in different directions today -- they are hearing strange noises and they are confused. So many foreign voices are saying, "This is the way," the average person has just about forgotten the familiar ring in the MASTER'S voice.

There is nothing worse than confusion. It is bad enough in the community, in politics, in the home, but it is far worse when it enters into the field of religion. Jesus taught, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He even said that if Satan be divided against himself, he will fall. If division will rob the devil of his power, what do you think it will do with the religious world? The heathen said to the missionary, "Go home, get together with others in your own land, then come back and convert me." It was a fitting rebuke. It is one that the world justly deserves.

We are taught that "God is not the author of confusion but of peace." Where you find confusion you cannot find GOD. But all peace is not peace. God's ancients cried, "Peace, Peace," but the Lord

reminded them that there was no peace. We cannot find religious peace in the creeds and theories of men. Councils and synods cannot give peace to the hearts of weary men. The world through its wisdom, learning, and philosophy, has never been able to find God. In fact, God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. Peace comes only from God. Peace can come only by hearing and obeying His will. There can be no peace apart from gospel obedience. Good deeds are as "filthy" rags in the sight of the Lord when they stand apart from subjection to His will. Man cannot do enough good works to save himself, but when he works righteousness, (Acts 10:34) he is not working his own works. He is working the works of God. When he obeys the truth he is set free from sin and becomes a servant of righteousness (Romans 6:16, 17).

He then is added unto the Lord's Church (Acts 2:47) where there is peace (Ephesians 2:15). He is now in a position to follow the Master. He will not be led astray by every woodpecker that knocks overhead. He will

put his trust in the Lord, follow him and no other, accept the revealed will of God which is the WORD of GOD, and follow after things which make for peace that passeth all understanding. Yes we can have peace in the

religious world. But it must come through the will of God, not the will of man. Let us hear HIS voice and follow Him, for he has said: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." WHO COULD ASK FOR MORE?

Excuse Me . . . Do You Have Have The Time?

By Glenn Colley

One of the first things I do every morning is attach my watch to my wrist. My regular exercise program includes hundreds of flexes daily as I lift my arm to see that clock with hands that push me from one place to the next. Probably most of us would readily admit addiction to it. I'm not sure whether that watch is more strapped to me, or me to it.

Time is such a profound concept. The measure of it is strictly earthly. In a timeless heaven there is no need for clocks or calendars. The time of day simply doesn't matter in a place where there is no night or change of seasons. II Peter 3:8 says, "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

When God created our world, He added a division of times to the blueprint: "And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:5).

I suggest that our

obsession with the measure of time has some spiritual assets that are unavailable anywhere else. There's good in that clock! Consider two blessings in our measurement of time:

1. It makes us stand in awe of eternity. The fact that everything earthly is temporal and bound by time makes even the most blatant sinners stop and think when eternity is discussed. Surely sober thinking of this sort will help motivate us to more faithful service.

2. It makes us comprehend the brevity of our years. The measurement of time goes not only forward, but also backward. How often do we all shake our heads and observe the swiftness with which our days have passed. This truth helps us (or should help us) to admit the urgency for faithfulness to our God. If I'm ever to be a devout Christian with heaven to anticipate, let me do it now. I know procrastination is the most foolish folly.

If you aren't a faithful Christian, take a long look at that wristwatch. Do you have the time?

Going On To Spiritual Growth!

Continued From Page 3

Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Jesus came to give us the "abundant life" (John 10:10), and that life is found only in His scriptures. How can we have that peace and enjoy that abundant life unless we study about our Lord as seen in his Word?

I am afraid that too many people have what is referred to as a Brylcream religion. Do you remember this hair cream's motto -- "a little dab will do you?" Too many Christians are content with just a little knowledge of God and his Word, when in fact their lack of knowledge causes them to grow weaker and weaker. Just as a person

cannot live without food for an indefinite period of time, so also the child of God will cease to grow and will in fact become spiritually ill, if they cease studying, worshipping, and doing God's will. We need to heed the admonitions of God and realize the responsibility we have of learning and gaining from God's book. God's Word can keep us from a life of sin (Psalm 119:11); it can give us something delightful to think about throughout the day (Psalm 1:1, 2); and it can fill our hearts and lives with that which is substantial and good (Matthew 5:6).

The world today knows of

the dangers and effects that "junk food" has upon our physical bodies, as well as that of our children. Any mother who would regularly give a diet of such food would be looked upon as a irresponsible mother. How much more the case, when we as parents consume our lives with television shows, newspapers, and magazines (clean and good though they may be), and leave off the daily meat of God's Word, which can feed us spiritually? May we prayerfully, and regularly, study God's Word for our benefit, as well as for our children's.

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 - Marriage
 - "Most Of A Minute"
- Questions About Truth
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- Proof Text Preaching!

Volume 28 Number 47

(USPS 691-760)

The Words Of Truth

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

Ingredients For A Happy Home

Johnny Ramsey

When God ordained marriage in Genesis 2, it was the intent of heaven that such an arrangement would bless mankind tremendously. Genuine love between husband and wife and parents and children should be rich and vibrant indeed. In the home we overlook failures and shortcomings as we labor together for a better day.

"I know I'm not much to look at," admitted the suitor.

"Oh, well," philosophized his bride to be, "you'll be away at work most of the time."

Seriously, when we live in harmony with Jehovah's blueprint for marriage we glorify our Creator together as Psalm 34:3 challenges us to do. Godly homes truly prepare us for a heavenly abode. The house of the righteous shall stand but the home of the wicked shall perish (Proverbs 12:7; 14:11). May we ever esteem the divine arrangement of this glorious entity!

Judgment and Our Destiny

Ultimately we shall all have to answer to the Lord for the deeds done in our body (II Corinthians 5:10). Some live in hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2) while others are heading toward everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). The way we live now will determine where we live then (John 8:21; I John 3:1-3). An old gospel song reminds us of

that solemn occasion:

When life is over some morning bright and fair I'll leave these lands with all the redeemed a crown to wear

Not made, not made with hands.

Recently it was my privilege to perform the wedding ceremony for two fine young Christians. Having known the young lady for all her life made it even a greater joy. Her parents are faithful members of the body of Christ. The same can be confidently said concerning the groom's parents. All in all it was a lovely, even monumental occasion. How grand it would be if every marriage began on such a firm foundation of spiritual values. The 1,500,000 divorces each year in America would soon be a thing of the past if each couple could sincerely repeat the sterling words of Psalms 34:3 . . .

"Oh magnify the Lord with me;

let us glorify his name together."

Since God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) we dare not put asunder what heaven has joined together (Matthew 19:6). In a

beautiful and precious passage we read that Christ and the church are perfect parallels to the bridegroom and the bride. In that powerful setting of Ephesians 5 we rejoice to learn anew that the wife is subject to the husband just as the church is to Christ. Truly, the groom loves his bride as Jesus adoringly loved the church and "gave himself up for it." When such affinity exists we clearly see a foretaste of glory divine. Young couples who have never seriously studied Ephesians 5:22-23 are not fully prepared for God's first divine institution -- marriage (Genesis 2).

The bulwark of righteousness in any nation is a home as God intended it to be. Psalms 127 boldly states:

"Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it."

So many couples today marry mainly for lustful reasons and then pursue a materialistic, hedonistic life-style. Is it any wonder that such homes, built upon the sinking sands of time, crumble into the dust and debris of carnality? In Proverbs 12:7 and 14:11 we learn that the house of the righteous stands firm while

the abode of the wicked deteriorates!

We asked each of the parties in the arrangement of holy matrimony to pledge their love and loyalty and purity to one another in these solemn and sweet words:

"With this ring I thee wed. I pledge unto you my life, my love, my all."

What a challenging promise; what a noble ideal. Would to God that all those getting married would honor this commitment. We took time to remind them, as well as the friends and family present, of several vital points that every Christian ought to know and cherish. In building homes that honor the creator we must break the ties that bind us to materialistic goals. Nothing hurts young couples more than craving finer houses, fancier cars and clothes, prestige in the community and so forth. False standards that pander to the flesh have shipwrecked many marriages. Setting our affections on things above (Colossians 3) will buttress the solid foundation of the home that glorifies God. A failure to emphasize eternal values has been the basic error of

thousands down through the years. Selfishness is at the heart of the unrest in American homes. Too many of us "want what we want when we want it" to utilize the words of an old Broadway musical. But, conversely, Christianity is based upon denial of self (Luke 9:23) and service unto others (Mark 10:45). The last stanza of a challenging gospel song sets the proper tone:

"None of self and all of Thee

None of self and all of Thee

Lord, Thy love at last has conquered

None of self and all of Thee."

Putting the Lord first gets everything else in proper order! When both husband and wife enjoy serving the Lord together their home will be "set in order" and thus blessed (II Kings 20:1). When men like Joshua choose to serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15) and their wives are virtuous women (Proverbs 31) we will see a resurgence of family ties that never die. We desperately need parents who "are both righteous before God" (Luke 1:6) who command their children after them to walk in the way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19) with a genuine faith (II Timothy 1:5). How angels in heaven rejoice and demons in hell tremble when young couples promise to glorify God together!

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Are You Ready To Serve?

Gary Colley

Every Christian should be ready to serve in the Lord's church. In accordance with ability and opportunity, responsibility is found. "Put

them in mind," says Paul, "to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). Paul delighted in identifying himself as simply, "a servant of God" (Titus 1:1), and "Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:1).

Of our Lord's life, we can without question say it was a life of service. "And 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 FOR TO READ" (Luke 4:16). If we are Christ-like, we likewise should be ready to be more than a passive worshipper. We should be active in serving in every way. Being ready shows interest, preparation, and willingness in carrying out the greatest work on earth!

The Psalmist affirms: "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand (days anywhere else. GC). I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10). A doorkeeper may seem to some to be a menial task and unworthy of their time, but in the "house of God" any task is worthy of our diligence! If we are called upon to sweep the floor, turn on and off the lights, help with upkeep, or to preach, wait on the Lord's table, lead the singing, lead the thoughts of the congregation in prayer, help with the baptismal service, or any number of related duties necessary to carrying out the work of the Lord, WE SHOULD BE READY AND WILLING. Develop your talents, use your opportunities and be willing to try, doing your best, so that with Paul your epitaph may read, "A servant of Jesus Christ!"

Reflections On The Election

For many Americans, and especially Christians, November 3 was an anxious day. It has been many years since God's people have been so urgently called on to cry out against sinful trends like these which are supported by Governor Clinton. With his election comes a massive blow to the pro-life cause. There comes a White House supportive of legally protected homosexual rights, and heavily involved in anti-family organizations like the National Organization of Women. It is a White House which supports local efforts to make condoms available in our schools, and opposes "Content Restrictions" on grants made by the National Endowment for the Arts, so obscenity can parade as art supported by our taxes. (If these things still surprise you, your bookstore will sell you a copy of "Putting People First" by Bill Clinton and Al Gore). It's amazing to me that we have come to this point. What chance of winning would our new president have had at the turn of this century? Our society would have spent little time considering making leaders of the proponents of these sinful trends. Times have changed.

Please permit me some reflections on Election '92.

1. FOR THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS, MONEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MORALS

Think back. How much did you read or hear in the media pertaining to the afore-mentioned moral ills in Mr. Clinton's hip pocket? Very little. How much did you hear about the economy? One survey conducted after the election showed that only 5% of

Americans voted based on their concern about abortion.

I know the economy is important. That's not the question here. The question is why we were so eager to sell the importance of morality in America to buy the hopes for a different economy! We may or may not get the economy on track, but we will definitely have a president with immoral beliefs.

2. SOME CHRISTIANS BELIEVE POLITICS ARE MORE SACRED THAN OUR CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY TO STAND FOR RIGHT.

Those of us who took a vocal stand against the "new morality" of the Arkansas Governor were met with opposition from some Christians. "Preachers shouldn't get involved in politics!" is an unwritten law that blinds some folks. If politicians only involved themselves with economy, defense, public schools, etc. then I would agree. But what happens when political agendas are in blatant opposition to Christ and Christian principles? Must Christians still maintain silence while at every turn another defender of worldliness works relentlessly to poison peoples minds?

I've heard many say, "I learned a long time ago to never discuss religion or politics!" This is not an attitude born of Biblical truths. In fact, it is the opposite of the Christianity of the first century. They taught the doctrines of Christ without regard to the "politics" of the society in which they lived. They knew men would live and die putting more stock in

this world than the next if they didn't speak out. Remember Acts 4? The authorities commanded Peter and John not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. Note their response, and adopt it for your own: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, Judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (vs. 19, 20) After they were threatened and released they went straight to their fellow Christians and prayed together. Here is part of that marvelous prayer: ". . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word . . ." (vs. 29).

Do you think it would be good to oppose something as political as a labor union, if what they were doing was against the morals of the Bible? Before you answer, read Acts 19:23-28. This simply illustrates the folly in saying that we must be silent in our efforts to teach Biblical morality if politics are somehow involved.

Do you really think the Apostle Paul would have remained silent through these recent weeks if he were here?

3. SOME THINGS REMAIN CONSTANT REGARDLESS OF THE ELECTION.

We must not become discouraged when our influence for right seems to fail. The Lord never promised that the majority would be saved, or would love the Christ. (Matthew 7:13, 14) We are in the world, not of the world. Jesus said, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them

out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:15, 16)

Christians will continue to hate sin and love sinners. They will continue to work to make this world a better place and draw people to the glorious light of Christ Jesus. (Matthew 28:18)

4. OUR GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL

God made this world, and will bring it to a halt at His discretion. When scoffers would suggest that God isn't going to keep His word and call all men into accounting, Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come . . ." (II Peter 3:9).

Place your faith forever in Him. This world, with its likes and dislikes, policies and politics, leaders and followers, will someday pass. Christ, and His word, will not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)



The Words Of Truth

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Unprofitable Servants

Victor M. Eskew

The "grace only" advocates in the church boldly declare that man is saved 100% by the grace of God. They proclaim that man does not contribute one whit to his salvation. They would have their listeners to believe that when one teaches man to save himself from this untoward generation, he is teaching legalism.

One of the "proof-texts" for their position is Luke 17:10. In this verse Jesus said: "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." The argument is that even though we do all the things commanded we are still "unprofitable." Therefore, we had to have been saved 100% by the grace of God, and that nothing we did contributed to our being saved in the least.

In this verse, Jesus was not teaching about the necessity of our obedience. Jesus was teaching about one's attitude toward his salvation.

Salvation is never earned regardless of the amount of obedient acts performed. Even the most obedient is unworthy of the blessings he will reap. Salvation will ever be a free, undeserved, unmerited gift of a loving and kind God. This should be the attitude of all the faithful. We should bow our heads before God's throne, and say, "We are unprofitable servants."

This is a far cry from saying that nothing we do contributes to our salvation. Jesus himself said that only those who "do" the will of the Father shall enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21). Didn't Jesus know that we do not do anything to get to heaven? Did He contradict His words found in Luke 17:10? Certainly not! Man must "save himself" (Acts 2:40). Does this obedience earn him his salvation? No!

Man must contribute to his salvation everything God has told him to contribute. To say that man contributes nothing to his redemption is to say that God requires nothing of him. The ultimate end of such a

doctrine would be universalism for the Bible teaches that God's grace has appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11).

There is a great gulf be-

tween saying that we do not earn our salvation and saying that one does not contribute one whit to his salvation. The first statement harmonizes with Jesus' words of Luke 17:10. We are unprofitable

servants. The latter statement, however, is false doctrine. The teaching should be rejected, and those who teach it should be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18).
--Pocahontas, TN.

Who Is Involved In Preaching?

Tim Nichols

We believe in preaching. The early church engaged in the practice in their assemblies (Acts 2:42) and the great apostle Paul was inspired to state that it is an essential part of spiritual learning and faith (Romans 10:14-17). But who is to participate in the public preaching of God's word? Is this the one act engaged in by only one individual in our assemblies? We hope not. Just as all are involved in praying, singing, the Lord's supper, and giving, all can (and ought to be) deeply involved in the preaching of divine truth. But how? All speaking at the same time would be like the chaos condemned in I Corinthians 14. Since the purpose of preaching is to increase the faith of the hearer (Romans 10:17) and to impart information revealed in the Holy Scriptures (I Corinthians 2:9-16), it is clear that attending to, reflecting upon and receiving divine truth is the privilege and responsibility of all.

Compared with other pursuits, we generally spend little time searching for divine truth. Let's resolve to use that time spent listening to preaching to our eternal advantage. Consider these comments, penned in 1824:

A man professes to teach arithmetic; he gets a class of forty boys from twelve to fifteen years old, we shall say. He tells them to meet once a week and he will give them a lecture or a sermon on some important point in this useful science. The first day he lectures on the cube root for an hour. They sit bookless and thoughtless, heedless, and, perhaps, often drowsy, while he harangues them. He blesses

them and sends them home, to return a week hence. They meet. His text is arithmetical progression. He preaches an hour; dismisses as usual. The third day of the meeting up comes vulgar fractions; the fourth, rule of three; the fifth, addition, the sixth, notation; the seventh, cube root again, etc. etc. Now in this way, I hesitate not to say, he might proceed seven years and not finish one accountant. Who ever thought that a science or an art could be taught this way? And yet this is the only way, I may say, universally adopted of teaching the Christian religion. And so it is that many men have sat under the sound of the gospel (as they call it) for forty years, that cannot expound one chapter in the whole New Testament. And yet these same Christians would think it just to prosecute by civil law that teacher who would keep their sons four or five years at English grammar or arithmetic, and receive their money, and yet not one of

their sons able to expound one rule in syntax or arithmetic. They pay the parson -- they are of maturer minds than their children, and they have been longer under his tuition, and yet they will excuse both the person and themselves for knowing just as little, if not less, of the New Testament, than their striplings know of grammar or arithmetic (Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist, Vol. 1, No. 12, 1824, p. 77).

Although these comments were directed to the irrational sermonizing of the sectarian world of the day, they seem to hit a broader target which may include us at times. In the pulpit and in the pew we need open Bibles, clear and careful thinking, open minds, and open hearts.

--Route 1, Box 211,
Burlington, WV 26710.

Marriage

1700 Years Ago

Beautiful is the marriage of Christians, two who are one in hope, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice.

They are both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit.

They are two in one flesh, and where there is one flesh, there is also one spirit.

They pray together, they worship together, instructing one another, strengthening one another.

Side by side they visit God's church; side by side they face difficulties and persecutions, share their consolations.

They have no secrets from one another; they never bring sorrow to each other's hearts.

Unembarrassed they visit the sick and assist the needy. They give alms without anxiety.

Psalms and hymns they sing. Hearing and seeing this, Christ rejoices. To such as these He gives His peace.

Where there are two together, there also He is present; and where He is, there evil is not.

--Tertullian, Third Century, AD

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"Most Of A Minute"

Maybe sometimes we begin to think that our most difficult temptations to overcome are new and somehow unique to our generation. That simply isn't true, and understanding this fact is important in our seeing the Bible as relevant for our lives. Think of a prevalent sin for 1992, and let's see if it's in the Bible: Adultery? It's in there. Murder? It's in there. Homosexuality? It's in there. I could go on, but you get the point.

So where do I go when I'm bombarded with temptation to do things I know are wrong? Well, first, I must realize that no temptation is brand new -- it's just new to me. Next, understand that someone in the Bible faced a similar temptation and either withstood it, or went ahead and committed the sin. I can see then the end result of each. Finally, let me remember that I serve a Master who was tempted "in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15), and work every day to be as much like Jesus as possible. Today, let's work to be the best people we can be.

Questions About Truth

Winfred Clark

One of the most famous questions about the truth was asked by a man named Pilate. This question was raised when Jesus spoke of his coming into the world to bear witness unto the truth and announced that those who were of the truth would hear his voice (John 18:37). It is against that background that you have the question of Pilate: "What is truth?" (John 18:38). This is a case where we find a man asking questions about the truth who does not seem to have any interest at all in the truth. That is not the nature of our study. We want to focus on some questions that will help us to better appreciate the truth.

For example. We have a question that was asked by Paul that would help men to better understand the truth on a given topic. Note his question: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31). Paul has just shown that one is justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. He shows the righteousness of God is by the faith (Romans 3:22). That means such comes by the gospel which is a system of faith. It requires faith in his blood (Romans 3:25). He concludes that one is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans 3:25). He concludes that one is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans 3:28). But some might say: "Then you do away with the law and make it worthless." They would say: "you make void the law." But to the contrary. What Paul was preaching was the very thing that those who followed the law would come to (Galatians 3:22-29). So his preaching the truth about the faith and how one is justified by faith does not mean that he has made void the law. He has spoken the truth about the law; and that it could not justify. It would therefore be a misrepresentation of Paul to

say, "He does not believe in the law."

We might do well to look at some questions that are similar.

DOES BAPTISM MAKE VOID THE BLOOD OF JESUS?

Very often this is the charge that is made. When the truth is taught that baptism is indeed essential to salvation (Mark 16:16, I Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16, Acts 2:38), one might hear it said; "you are making void the blood of Jesus." But is that the case? Can one teach the truth on the subject of baptism and at the same time teach the truth concerning the blood of Jesus? None of us should doubt for a moment that we are saved by the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7). We know "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 8:22). But do these facts mean that baptism is not necessary to the salvation of the alien?

Would Peter and the other apostles know the truth on this matter? We can have no doubt about the matter. Did not Peter and the other apostles hear our Lord say; "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28)? We all know that these are the same men who were told the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). But we also know what they said about the "remission of sins" after the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2:1-4). When they were asked what to do, what would they say? They said, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Now remember that these are the same men who heard Jesus say that his blood was shed for the remission of sins. Would these who are guided by the Spirit of our God make void the blood of Christ by telling them to be baptized for the remission of sins? Absolutely not. That was not

the case then, neither is it the case now.

DOES THE CESSATION OF MIRACLES MAKE VOID THE HOLY SPIRIT?

When one points out the truth that the miraculous has ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-12); he is often accused of not believing in the work of the Holy Spirit. It is made to appear that we oppose the Holy Spirit and his work. But nothing could be further from the truth. We are willing to accept what the Holy Spirit has to say about such. We are not opposing His work, we support his work. But we also support what he had to say through inspired men about his work. When he said through Paul; "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." It seems to me that we are in good company when we say about the miraculous the same thing the Holy Spirit said through Paul. Would one be so naive as to accuse the Holy Spirit of making void the Holy Spirit? That is exactly what would be done if one accepted the premise of those who would say "if you deny the miraculous today you make void the Holy Spirit." You can very clearly see that there is something that is said to be "in part" and it is sure that we have no problem understanding what he meant concerning that which is "in part." He identified it with "knowledge and prophecy" (I Corinthians 13:9). But what do we have that is complete or could be said to be "perfect" that they did not have? Jude would call it the faith (Jude 3). We have the complete revelation from God that these did not have and they said they did not have it. Since we have "that which is perfect," then that which was in part has ceased. But that which was in part was related to the

miraculous. This shows that there is no conflict between the cessation of the miraculous and the truth concerning the Holy Spirit.

DOES OBEDIENCE MAKE VOID GRACE?

We all know of the recent charges and counter charges concerning the matter of grace and obedience. The minds of many have been influenced by Calvinistic thinking. I recall a trip to a radio station in years gone by when a denominational group preceded our broadcast. On one occasion they wanted it known that they believed in grace, and that is a wonderful thing. But they should not think others do not believe in grace because they also believe what the Bible has to say about obedience.

The man who had much to say about grace also has much to say about obedience. Take Paul's statements in the book of Romans. Time and again he will speak of grace. He will speak of being "freely justified by his grace" (Romans 3:24). He will also speak of having access "by faith into this grace" (Romans 5:2). But the same man will also address the matter of obedience. Listen to what he will have to say; 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 servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). Nothing could be clearer. --Athens, AL.

Purposeful Pulpit Preaching

Rick Laing

As a preacher, I am always concerned that my sermons and lessons be centered on the Bible. I am convinced that preaching should involve three things:

1. God must be glorified. Acts 12:23; Romans 15:6; Ephesians 1:6; Galatians 5:26.
2. The brethren must be edified (built up). Romans 15:2; I Corinthians 14:3, 4, 17, 26
3. The lost must be notified. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 20:20-21

That is why we start with the Bible, end with the Bible, and use Bible in between, because we avoid things that are contrary to sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:10) and stick to the glorious gospel with which we've been entrusted. (I Timothy 1:11), for we desire all men to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

You are encouraged to bring your Bibles and refer to the rules of faith and study God's great purposes for us as we pursue glorification, edification, and notification.

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November 27, 1992

See Inside Articles:

- Stop And Consider
- Our Citizenship Is In Heaven
- The Establishment Of The Church
 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - Who Did You Vote For?
 - What I Want My Children To Remember About Our Home
 - Hell Is Cool
- It's The Little Things That Count

Volume 28 Number 48

The Words Of Truth

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

No Conviction . . . No Conversion

Johnny Ramsey

We cannot over-emphasize the deep need for conviction in religion today. It has been truthfully and forcefully stated that where there is no conviction there can be no conversion. There was never an era of history that cried out for stalwart men of conviction any more distinctly than our present age. The demand is intense. We must have spiritual backbone in the religion of the Son of God. Devotees who "turn neither to the right hand nor to the left" as they pursue the Way of Truth -- this is our need. In the midst of immorality we need men like Joseph. To discourage idolatry we need legions like Joshua. We need builders like Nehemiah and destroyers like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:10). When tempted to bow down to sin we must be like Mordecai, a true man of conviction. When the convenient way out is error we must say with Micaiah: "As the Lord liveth and speaketh unto men, that will I say" (I Kings 22:14). The whole phalanx of God's army must manifest the determination of righteousness shown in the lives of Job, Daniel, Abraham, John the Immerser and Paul. The very epitome of pure conviction was, of course, Jesus the Christ.

Is your religion one of convenience or conviction? In the twentieth century it takes

real courage to obey the truth. Conviction is a must in living the life of a Christian. Preaching the Gospel, overseeing the flock of God, disciplining the wayward, helping the needy, encouraging the weak -- all of

these activities demand men and women with determination. Christianity is a system of faith, (Romans 1:17, Galatians 2:16). In Hebrews 11:1 we read:

"Now faith is the assurance

of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen

When our faith in the Word grows, our conviction glows brighter. Let us then study the Word more often (Romans 10:17), pray more fervently,

upon Jehovah's Word and then launch the deep waters of true Christianity. --3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

"Glory On The Mountain"

W. T. Allison

As one reads of the transfiguration of Jesus, he is overcome with the radiance of the scene. Jesus' raiment was "white and glistening." His countenance was "altered" and He appeared in "glory" as He talked to Moses and Elijah concerning His death.

Jesus could have gone on to heaven from that mountain had He so desired. Elijah was taken to heaven without experiencing death. Enoch was "taken up so that he should not see death." What held Jesus there was love, love for us, love that identified with sinful mankind. That love would move Him from the glory of the mountain to the misery of the valley. It would take him to the cross to die for our sins.

When Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, they spoke of His "departure." The word "departure" translates the Greek "exodus." The death of Jesus was to be a new and greater exodus than the departure of the Jewish slaves from Egypt under the

leadership of Moses.

The ancient exodus, made possible by the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, freed men socially and politically. The cross of Calvary, where Jesus offered His spotless life in atoning death, has power to liberate those who are slaves to sin and death.

A bright cloud overshadowed the scene, and when it was gone, so were Moses and Elijah. Jesus was found alone! Moses and Elijah represented the "law and prophets," but neither the law nor prophets could provide our pardon and freedom from sin. Only Jesus could accomplish this new exodus. The glory of the mountain was the glory of our Lord's liberating death. And from that cloud, the disciples heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him."

If you want freedom from sin, listen to Jesus! Between the transfiguration and ascension back to the Father, Jesus gave His commands. Faith (John 8:24). Repent (Luke 13:3). Confess

(Matthew 10:32). The Him." Baptized (Mark 16:16). "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." --1901 Schillinger Rd. S., Mobile, AL 36609.

Why Do People Go To A Particular Church?

Kenneth McClain

Some time back a survey was taken to find out why people attended a particular church. The following might surprise you.

3% came because the preacher visited them.

9% came because they were influenced by the beauty of the church building.

14% came because they were influenced by previous ties.

18% came because they lived near the church building.

22% came because they

liked certain members.

34% came because they had been invited by friends.

There is a great need for every member of the church to be active, working and inviting others to come. Let us heed the admonition of Paul: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Stop And Consider

We live such fast paced lives. One man said he lived like an ambulance -- always rushing from one emergency to the next, lights flashing and sirens screaming. Do you sometimes feel that way?

The Lord wants us to slow down long enough to ponder important realities. For example, the inspired Paul wrote:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, **THINK ON THESE THINGS.**" (Philippians 4:8) (Emphasis mine, GC)

We are different from animals. For one thing, we have souls. In addition, we have the ability to ponder. The Psalmist wrote, "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Have you ever thought of the significance in the many times the word "Consider" is used in the Bible? Consider these with me:

I. WE ARE TO CONSIDER THE PAST GENERATIONS.

The Holy Ghost saw fit to include many genealogies in our Bible. He had a reason. They help us to see the brevity of life, and to focus on the truly important issues of life. Moses said, "Remember the days of old, considering the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." (Deuteronomy 32:7) I

encourage people to research their family trees. It gives a valuable and sobering perspective.

2. WE ARE TO CONSIDER THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF A WORLDLY LIFE.

We must look to the end of life's path. Where am I headed? "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." (Deuteronomy 32:29) "Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts; consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye cloth you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put into a bag with holes." (Haggai 1:5, 6)

Picture the future when we "Lay up treasures" only on earth. What do you see? I can't live away from God and expect His blessings in heaven. It is for this reason that Christians don't rejoice in iniquity. (I Corinthians 13:6) Here is a person happy in denominationalism; a couple happy living in adultery; a businessman happy in riches derived from unethical practices; a Christian content to only now and then attend the worship assemblies of the church. Will I share their happiness in these things, or will I grieve for their sin?

III. WE ARE TO CONSIDER HOW GOOD IS GOD

(I Samuel 12:24) -- "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you . . ." What happens

to a person's heart when they spend much time considering the goodness of God? Their prayers become deep supplications and rich thanksgivings. They become people of willing, gentle forgiveness. Their worship becomes a meaningful expression of the heart.

The Psalmist wrote, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits." (Psalm 68:19) Parents, let's try to verbally ponder God's goodness around our children. Be specific when you thank God in prayers before them.

IV. CONSIDER THE EDUCATION GLEANED FROM NATURE.

The Master said, "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." (Matthew 6:28, 29)

What lessons do we learn from nature? We learn that the theory of man originating by evolution is not true, because only a divine Being could bring this universe into existence. We learn that man is foolish to ever think he surpasses God in greatness. We learn to have God's standard of balance in our lives. We learn that we should, as the old song says, "Be not dismayed what ere betied; God will take care of you."

Slow down. Sit down. Take a deep breath, and consider the things of God. (Psalm 104:34) -- "My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord."

Our Citizenship Is In Heaven

Joe E. Galloway

"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20, ASV).

It is not unusual today to hear the charge made against Christians that they are "other worldly." Those making this charge have noticed that faithful Christians put more emphasis on the life to come, and on preparing for it, than they do on things of this life. Those critical of this believe the greater (if not the only) emphasis should be on things pertaining to this life, now. Their view is that the church's main concern should be with such matters as poverty, ecology, inequality, and other similar social problems. They either have little (or no) faith in a life to come or else they think that we need to do little, if anything, to prepare for it.

The charge that Christians are "other worldly" is true. This is the way it should be, for this is the emphasis the Bible teaches us to give. The opening text stated, "Our citizenship is in heaven." To Christians, our life here on earth is similar to visiting a foreign country: our stay is temporary and this is not our home. It is not where we belong. Jesus expressed this concept when he said his disciples, though in the world, were "not of the world" (John 17:14-16). Romans 12:2 speaks of this same idea when

it tells Christians, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed . . ."

It is good to enjoy our life here. We should do our part to make this world a better place in which to live. But, knowing that there is an eternal life to come, our priority should be to properly prepare ourselves for the world to come. And, we should do our best to teach and encourage others to also make such preparation.

Having risen with Christ in baptism (Colossians 2:12), let's seek and set our "affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1, 2), gladly putting our emphasis on things that are eternal rather than on things which are temporal (II Corinthians 4:18). Then when Christ comes we will forever live with him in heaven (Colossians 3:4)!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greeneville, TN 37743.

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The Establishment Of The Church

W. A. Holley

The church of the New Testament was not established in the Eden; nor was it established in the time of Noah, or in the days of Abraham or Moses, or the prophets. We need to sweep away this rubbish so that we may see the beautiful truth of God's word.

In fact, the church of Christ was not established in the patriarchal age nor in the Mosaic age. If one thinks that the church was established before the 1st Pentecost, following the resurrection, A.D. 33, we ask that proof be submitted to us.

As a matter of fact, the church of the New Testament was not established during the ministry of John the Baptist, nor in the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. This may seem strange to many of our readers but it is true.

Just when the beginning of the church would be is discussed in Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-4. When these passages are read carefully, we will learn that the kingdom or church would be established in the "last days," which is the New Testament age (Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-17).

The language used by the prophets is symbolic language. The word "mountains" refers to governments, the Roman Empire and lesser governments. The kingdom or church of Christ would be "exalted above the hills" -- it would surpass civil governments. "All nations shall flow unto it," the prophet said. Hence, people from all nations shall enter it (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:1-4, 9-13, 14-36, 37-38, 41-43, 47). "All flesh" refers to both Jews and Gentiles having the right to become children of God (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28).

The kingdom of God or the church of Christ was established when "the word of the Lord" went forth from Jerusalem (Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-5,

47). The new Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem is the church established by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:18-28; Galatians 4:21-31). Let the prophet Zechariah speak: "Thus saith Jehovah: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of Jehovah of hosts, The holy mountain" (Zechariah 8:3, ASV).

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). During the personal ministry of John and Jesus Christ the church or kingdom of God had not been established. How can we know? Well, in 30 A.D. The kingdom was "at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2). It had "come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9). In 31 A.D. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:9-10). In 32 A.D. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18-19). Jesus taught his disciples that would not taste of death "till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). In Acts 1:6, the disciples were still thinking that a literal kingdom would be restored. Jesus' kingdom, however is not a literal, earthly one (John 18:36), but it is a spiritual kingdom (Hebrews 12:28; Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 1:9).

Thus, when the power came on the 1st Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection the kingdom or the church came into existence (Acts 1:8, ASV; 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47). Peter teaches that the events of Pentecost represent "the beginning" of the church (Acts 11:14-15).

Our readers should understand that on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection about 3000 souls were added to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47). One cannot add to something that does not exist. Before Pentecost the kingdom or church was spoken of in the

future tense, but after Pentecost it is spoken of in the present tense.

Is it scripturally possible for one to be in the church and out of the kingdom at the same time? The answer is no! Because the same acts that makes one a member of the church also makes him a citizen in the kingdom. (John 3:3-5; Hebrews 12:22-28; Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 1:9).

The New Testament went into effect on the 1st Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Hebrews 9:15-17; Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 7:12; 8:4). Hence, the provisions of the Old Testament no longer apply.

Do the Holy Scriptures support modern denominationalism? No, that concept came too late to be included in the Biblical records. For example, Boniface III, in 606 A.D. is considered to be the first pope.

Other denominational churches have also been established: Adventism, in Massachusetts, 1831, by William Miller; The American Baptist, in Providence, R.I. 1639, by Roger Williams; the Methodist Church, in London, England, 1729, by John Wesley; the Presbyterian Church, in Switzerland, 1535, by John Calvin; the Christian Church, in Midway, Kentucky, 1859, by a group who wanted to add an organ to the worship; the Mormon Church, Seneca, New York, 1830, by Joseph Smith; the Nazarene Church, Los Angeles, California, 1895, by P. F. Bresee; the Church of the Living God, Wrightsville, Arkansas, 1889, by William Christian, to name but a few of the denominations. These remarks are submitted in the interest of truth, not because we have any ill will against others.

When the Lord Jesus Christ established his church, what were the original terms of membership? Were people told that the church was a

non-essential institution? Were they taught that they should join the church of their choice? Were they informed that one can be saved out of the church as well as in it? Were they told that one church is as good as another? If you know where Scripture supports such affirmations, please send them to me.

Verily, in apostolic times those whom the Lord added to his church, were those who obeyed the truth of God (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Revelation 22:14; Matthew 7:21-23).

What were "the steps" of their faith? (Romans 4:12). These Biblical steps are:

(1) Believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 11:6; John 6:28-29).

(2) Repent of all sins (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; II Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31).

(3) Confess with your lips the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Philippians 2:10-11).

(4) Be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21). We urge you to obey today.

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

"Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Here's a simple medical question: If you felt a head cold coming on, what vitamin should you take? If you answered "Vitamin C," you are like me and 20 million other Americans. After all . . . everybody knows that.

Would it surprise you that there is no conclusive scientific evidence to support this notion? Skeptical researchers attribute this to the placebo effect; which is that if you believe something will help, it probably will. You want to hear something silly? I'll probably keep taking them anyway when the sniffles come on . . . and that's O.K. . . with things like Vitamin C.

This same concept, however, sometimes happens with our religion. Sometimes thru Bible study we learn that something we've believed for years really isn't right. Good sense forces us in such a case to change our beliefs to fit the Good Book.

II Peter 3:18 says, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Growth is a fundamental part of our Christianity . . . and change of false ideas when we learn better is an important part of that growth.

During the Civil War Abraham Lincoln was asked if he was sure that God was on the Union's side. His answer, to which we all could pay heed, was that his main concern was that he be on God's side.

Who Did You Vote For?

Dale Jenkins

Every four years concerned and active Americans go to the polls in hopes of electing a savior for our nation. . . A savior for the fears and frustrations of the future. . . Someone who will lead us; . . . a King Author. . . Someone who will "Make us feel good about America," . . . a spokesman for our failed dreams. . . A leader who will come along and solve all our problems. In the mid-70's we selected a peanut farmer from Georgia, someone different from the perceived "big boss" image projected by Nixon and Watergate. For the 80's we selected a golden tongued grandfather who expressed our hate for communism and convinced us we needed to

strengthen our military. For '92 we've selected one whose words promise new economic prosperity. Each of these leaders promised to fill the need the electorate felt most at that moment.

When will we ever learn?

No national leader can dispel our every fear. No gifted or well-marketed spokesman will lead us to the promised land. What is needed is not a rebuilding of our infrastructure (whatever that is), nor a solidifying of blue-collar jobs, nor a stronger national defense, nor a strengthening of traditional values. What is needed is a real Savior! One who can in fact lead us to the Promised land of peace and prosperity. . . . The One who holds the

answer to every fear, failure and frustration of mankind. . . A hands-on leader who understands the problems of the working class.

The fact is man has for millenniums looked for someone who would provide the answers, but has most

often looked in the wrong direction. This real Savior doesn't live in Little Rock, or Plains, or Kennybunckport but "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool:

what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?" (Acts 7:48-49).

--Rt. 6 Box 28, Hamilton, AL 35570.

What I Want My Children To Remember About Our Home

That their father and mother loved each other.

That our home was a happy one because we all worked to keep it that way.

That each child was given every possible opportunity to develop his own personality.

That each child's personal possessions were sacred to him if kept in their proper place.

That the books in the house were to be read (and handled

rightly) and that none was under lock and key because of questionable contents.

That absolute truth was present there; no earnest questioner, however young, was put off with evasion and excuses.

That Sunday was the happiest day of the week, one which we all looked forward to because it was when we went to church together.

That although father and

mother worked hard and long at their respective jobs, they found time every day to keep informed on current events, to read good books, to have fun with their children, and to pray.

That their father and mother "loved the Lord with all their heart, mind and soul" and that they passed their love onto me.

--Selected

It's The Little Things That Count

It's the little things in life that count.
It's very plain to see;
A kindly smile will go a mile
To lighten misery.

When you're downhearted,
Seems the world has turned you down
A kindly word will pep you up
And erase that dreary frown.

Not all clouds have silver linings
Some are lined with blue.
Nor each morn do you wake up cheery
Sometimes, it seems they're few.

A kindly pat upon the back
By a friend or someone dear
Will recall a happy memory
And again your sad heart cheer.

Again, it's just the little things
That make life's treasures mount.
It's not the big deeds you perform,
It's the little things that count.

Wick Wise

Hell Is Cool

By Steve Gunter

The collapse of communism and various empires of evil invite us to remember Peter's pointed warning as expressed in I Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Sobriety and watchfulness remain a Christian requirement in times like these.

The young and not-so-young alike are enamored by evil. What else is one to make of the army of black t-shirts in our society which proudly proclaim devotion to devilish doctrines of every description. What is the message of musical groups named "Megadeath," "Black Sabbath," "Slayer," and the like? To ask such a question is to provide its own answer.

The present age has adopted the proposition that hell does not exist, therefore it follows, hell is cool. This generation fears neither God nor Hell. Sadly such a pernicious philosophy has found lodging in the hearts of some brethren.

Our Lord suggested rather strongly that hell is a place of heat and horror. Matthew 25:41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand,

depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." We too should believe in hell and earnestly seek to escape its vile and vulgar inhabitants, the cursed of the ages.

Let us never shun to declare the counsel of God in the matter of eternal punishment (Acts 20:27).

--1202 Royal Drive, Bentonville, AR 72712.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (Acts 17:24, 25)

December 4, 1992

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Volume 28 Number 49

(USPS 691-760)

The Words Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; b
Words of Truth and soberness."

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"In The Shadow Of The C ;"

Allen Webster

Jesus lived a lifetime in the looming shadow of the cross. He was conceived for Calvary, born to die, begotten for burial and reared for the resurrection. He spent three decades on death row. He was aware of the agony that awaited His body and the anguish that would tear His heart.

We are largely left in the dark concerning His early years. At what point in His physical development He knew who He was, we are not told, but it must have been very early. Mary pondered the things concerning His remarkable birth and early days in her heart (Luke 2:19) and, without doubt, taught Him. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). By the time He was twelve He was "about his father's business" (Luke 12:49).

He grew up reading the prophecies about Himself. He saw His sacrifice *implied* (Genesis 4:3-5), *prophesied* (Genesis 22:8), *typified* (Exodus 12:5) and *personified* (Isaiah 53:7). On earth, His work was *identified* by John (John 1:29) and *verified* by the apostles (Acts 8:30-35). Presently, as the slain Lamb, He is *glorified* (Revelation 5:12-13).

What was it like to grow up

in the shadow of the cross? He was not isolated or sheltered from events that depicted His own future.

Imagine Jesus as a boy seeing His first Roman crucifixion. Gary Stanley has tried to recreate what might have happened in the following thought-provoking article: (edited)

Imaginary conversation between a boy and centurion soldier

It was the first crucifixion the boy had ever seen

The legionnaire leaned against his spear and studied the boy standing at the base of the cross. The old soldier had handled hundreds of crucifixions, and this one was no different. Every crucifixion had its victim. Every crucifixion had its Roman sanction. Every crucifixion had its audience.

The guard was a seasoned student of the expressions on each spectator's face. Most feigned disgust and clucked useless sympathies, but their eyes betrayed a morbid fascination.

As the day wore on, the spectators came and went, but their eyes always seemed the same. By the evening meal, the crowd had left. Only the boy remained. He stood quite still, a bundle of wood at his feet. The guard recognized him; he was a tradesman's son and often traveled the streets making deliveries for his

father.

Above, the man stretched out on the cross coughed. His beaten face made nonsense of once-delicate features. The dying man looked down into the eyes of the boy and his suffering seemed deeper than expression. Each breath caused muscle spasms through his frame. He swallowed and tried to clear the pounding in his head.

The boy swallowed too. This was the first crucifixion he had seen. He took in every detail of the scourged and beaten man. The guard stepped over to the boy and placed a hand on his shoulder. "Pretty gruesome, isn't it?" he said. "This fellow dreamed of being a king, but he is only another revolutionary, an enemy of state."

The youngster made no response. "Why so silent, boy? His suffering is almost over. I know. I've watched hundreds die. Some say that the last few moments are actually euphoric."

The boy picked up his bundle and walked silently away. It was nearly dark.

Jesus actually read His own obituary (Isaiah 53). He knew that He would be pierced (Psalms 22:16; Zechariah 12:10) and hanged on a tree (Deuteronomy 21:23). He learned of the thirst involved (Psalms 69:21) and the failing of His strength (Psalms 109:4; Isaiah 53:12). He knew he would be betrayed (Psalms

41:9; 55:12-14) and forsaken by His own (Zechariah 13:7). Imagine working every day with one that you knew would get paid to be your betrayer!

Christ grew up reading about Abraham sparing Isaac but knew that His Father would not be able to stop the "knife from falling" on Him (Genesis 22). He studied the passover lamb (Exodus 12) and knew that He was the substance of that shadow (John 1:29). He went to offer His sacrifices and knew that each one was but a figure of His bleeding wounds (cf. Leviticus 1-5; John 3:14-16).

Imagine Jesus as a boy seeing His first Roman scourging. What must He have thought when the soldier drew back the whip and laid leather to skin. He knew that His back would one day be barred to the same "cat-of-nine-tails." When He heard the moans of agony and saw the blood pour from the wounds, He was looking into His mirrored future. When He heard the crowd's mockery, He knew He, too, would feel the sting of their insults. He must have dreaded being smitten, spat upon (Isaiah 50:6), wounded, bruised and striped (Isaiah 53:5).

Imagine Jesus as a boy seeing His first funeral procession. Later in life, He ended every funeral He attended (Luke 7:11-15; John 11:43). But, suppose, He attended a funeral as a boy.

What must have gone through His mind, to know that He would die a premature death and be laid in a borrowed tomb? He must have thought that they would be unable to get a big enough rock to keep Him in the grave! He had read that He would be buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9), but also that His soul would not be left in Hades (Psalms 16:8-10). He knew that He would be resurrected (cf. John 2:19), ascended (Psalms 68:18; 110:1), anointed (Psalms 45:6, 7) and enthroned (II Samuel 7:12, 13).

Yes, Jesus lived in the shadow of the cross, that we might live in the shadow of heaven!

Our Children

Jerry A. Riley

I often think of what my father told me while I was still a boy. He said, "I'll feel I've made a contribution to this world if my three children are honorable men and women." He sought to influence us in "what is right," and thereby fulfill his purposes in the world. Now that I have two sons, I too feel my greatest work may be done through my children.

We may never realize the impact of our lives on our children. An old proverb says, "Any fool can count the

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Other "Meet"

We are all familiar with the word "meet," and with what it means. However, in many Bibles the word has a second meaning, and understanding this opens doors to great thought. For example, consider the word "meet" in this verse:

Deuteronomy 3:18 -- "And I commanded you at that time, saying, The Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it: Ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war."

In this verse the definition of the word "meet" is obviously "suited for; appropriate for." Moses wanted the men who were minded and fit for military service. These men were "meet" for the war. Now, with that in mind, consider some other passages:

(Genesis 2:18) -- "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." We often link these two words into one, "helpmeet." But what this actually means is that God would make a helper for Adam, and that she would be "meet," or perfectly suited for, Adam.

Elihu, while accusing Job of charging God with injustice, said, "Surely it is

meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more" (Job 34:31).

In (Proverbs 11:24) the writer says, ". . . There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

There are several examples in the New Testament where the word is used this way. In fact, there are many times when the same original word is translated "worthy." In Luke 15:19 the prodigal son said, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." He believed he wasn't "fit," or "suited for" life with his father.

Now, this becomes particularly interesting to Christians when we read Colossians 1:12. Paul writes, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Remember, the word "meet" means "suited for." How does God make us, with all our sinful blemishes and human weaknesses, fit for heaven? (Romans 3:23; I John 1:10, Romans 7:14-25).

1. Although I don't merit "meetness" by my works, when I become a Christian by obedience to the Gospel, I complied with the terms of

favor. I have repented of my sins, and believed in the Redeemer. He makes us blameless when He forgives our sins by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5, Acts 22:16).

2. He has "translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13, 14).

3. When He grants us entrance into the church, we "taste of the heavenly gift," (Hebrews 6:4, 5). In the church we enjoy basically the same values, loves, desires as do the inhabitants of heaven. We love the same God and Christ. We have pleasure in the same truths. We prefer holiness instead of sin. We work to find our joy in holy living, rather than in carnal things.

4. In the church He leads us to become more and more accustomed to worshiping Him, the activity in which we will be forever engaged in heaven.

Have I followed the Lord who promises to make me "meet" for the inheritance of Christians, for heaven?

(II Timothy 2:21) -- "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Our Children

Continued From Page 1

number of seeds in an apple; only God can count the number of apples in a seed." We never see the potential which God sees in a person. Still, we must believe that God can multiply our influence a hundredfold through our children.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, he said, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you" (II Timothy 1:5). Who dared to dream the faith of Lois and Eunice might someday touch the whole world? But who considered they were rearing a child like Timothy? Even

when Timothy was a boy, studying the Bible under supervision, there was no way for him to know the future God had for him. Yet, God was fashioning Timothy to be a great servant in the early church.

Let's see our children as gifts of God! We have been given them for only a short time. Thus, we must share our faith with them, teach them the ways of God, pray with them, and commit them to God for His use. Our influence in their lives can transcend our personal weaknesses. We must have faith in God, specifically the faith He can use in the lives of our children.

Church Bashing

John Gipson

To hear some preachers tell it, you would think that 99% of our brotherhood is made up of legalists who believe that they can save themselves through lawkeeping. They act as if nobody had ever preached on the Cross, or the grace of God, before they came on the scene. They think that we have never heard the great stories of the Bible, much less dipped into the Psalms or Proverbs. They act as if 20 or 30 passages of Scripture are all that we have ever read and that we preach these (most from the book of Acts) week in and week out.

That just isn't true. I have heard all of the Bible

expounded all of my life by very capable teachers and preachers and my debt to them is great.

I resent some emotionally ill person being described as an example of what "our" Christianity does to people.

I resent the caustic insinuations that the brotherhood can't tell a metaphor from a gatepost, or a parable from a poem. To hear some tell it you would think we have never put a passage in its historical setting, or discovered that there is narrative in the Bible. You would think that we are so senseless that we cannot discern the difference between

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Dial 1-900-I'm Lonely

B. J. Clarke

"Are you lonely and in need of someone to talk to? Then just call 1-900-I'M LONELY. Two dollars for the first minute and 85 cents a minute thereafter. Don't be lonely. Just call." Sadly, thousands of lonely people spend small fortunes in calling these 1-900 numbers. Why do they call? It is the only source of companionship that many have. They believe that it is better to spend a fortune and talk to a stranger than to be all alone. Loneliness is an agonizing problem!

The Problem of Loneliness

-- Loneliness is not just a modern problem. It has plagued man since the beginning of time. In fact, the very first thing ever referred to in Scripture as not being good is loneliness. God looked at His creation and concluded that it was good. But He also saw something that was not good. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). It is still not good to be alone in 1992.

Many Bible characters are depicted as suffering the anguish of loneliness. David felt this when he said, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man

that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psalms 142:4). Elijah thought he was all alone in his battle against the evil men of his day. He was so distraught that he asked God to take his life (I Kings 19:1-10). One of the Psalmists exclaimed, "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (Psalms 102:7). Jeremiah experienced the ache of loneliness (Jeremiah 15:17). Even our Lord was abandoned in his hour of need. When He was praying in agony and needed encouragement, His disciples slept (Matthew 26:36-46). When He was arrested, His disciples all forsook Him and fled (Mark 14:50). Paul faced similar circumstances. He wrote to Timothy, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may be laid to their charge" (II Timothy 4:16).

The value of companionship is vividly described by King Solomon, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together,

then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). But what if I am not privileged to have a companion? How can I conquer my loneliness?

The Solution for Loneliness -- The real key to conquering loneliness is found in *John 16:32*, "Behold, the hour cometh, ye, is now come, that he shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." The Christian is never really alone!

The apostle Paul handled his loneliness by remembering this very thing. After remarking that all had forsaken him at his trial, he pointed out that he was not completely alone. "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me . . ." (II Timothy 4:17). The presence of the Lord in our lives is truly a comforting thought. Even if all leave and forsake us, Jesus has promised that He never will (Hebrews 13:5-6). Jesus is there for the prison inmate. He is there for the serviceman thousands of miles from home. Jesus is a friend for the person who just buried his companion. He is there for the couple whose hearts are breaking due to the loss of their precious child. Jesus is there for the single person who comes home to an empty place, prepares a meal for one and then goes to bed early. Simply put, Jesus is the answer for all human needs. We must by faith remember that He is there and that He cares (I Peter 5:7).

Conclusion -- Loneliness is an awful feeling to experience. God even threatened His people with loneliness as punishment for their sins (Numbers 23:9; Jeremiah 49:31). The worst kind of loneliness imaginable is that which will be experienced by

those who are lost when Jesus comes back: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," (II

Thessalonians 1:9). How awful to be without Jesus! Thanks be to God that we have a Savior who is with us in this life and in the life to come (Mark 10:30).

Another Look At Paul

Winfred Clark

I am sure those who read this have had the opportunity to study a number of lessons that center on the life of Paul. There is an abundance of material that can be used for such a study. We are also sure that such a study is a great way to expand the mind.

This study will attempt to take an over all view of the man's life. It will help us to appreciate him even more as we see the total picture.

1. THE HAVOC HE CAUSED

When we speak of havoc, we speak of the destruction, the ruin, the damage, the injury that was done. There is absolutely no question that such occurred. Luke will say, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church" (Acts 8:3). He not only tells us that Paul was in the business of hurting people, he will also tell us to what extent. He will say, "entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3).

We have a record to the

damage done to a man by the name of Stephen (Acts 7:58-60). We see him stoned to death and Paul was a party to it. In fact, you will find him later saying, "and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and kept the raiment of them that slew him" (Acts 22:20).

One can read the record of this fact from the hand of Paul. He will tell you that "I persecuted the church of God, and wasted (made havoc. ASV) of it" (Galatians 1:13). Here we have Paul describing what had been done.

There are times when he would tell us why he made havoc of the church. Listen to what he had to say to Timothy, "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 tells us exactly why he was doing what he was doing. He is saying he did not have the facts and thus did not believe.

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Church Bashing

Continued From Page 2

a custom and a command, much less a necessary inference from a hole in the wall. I resent godly men and women being ridiculed and scorned by some so-called 'preachers and scholars' among us.

Has wisdom slumbered until the 1960's waiting for a few great men to be born to lead everyone out of the wilderness with their paradigms and superior hermeneutics?

Don't get me wrong. I want to understand the Bible and take advantage of insights which will keep me in my

quest. Most of the Christians I know want the same thing. We're not opposed to being taught, we just don't enjoy being misrepresented and abused.

There are some among us who know a bit of Greek, exegetical methods, hermeneutical approaches, and theories of communication that haven't got to first base in learning how Jesus treated people.

If you get your kicks by bashing the brotherhood, count me out!

--Little Rock, AR.

"Most Of A Minute"

When a person is living in a way that is, to them, unsatisfactory, and they don't seem to be getting out of it, we say they're in a "rut." Well, if there is one thing the Bible teaches, it is that when our problem is sin, we can climb out of that rut and change the way we live.

One man put it this way: "If you are losing a tug of war with a tiger, give him the rope before he gets to your arm. You can always buy a new rope." Unfortunately, some people look to their lifestyle of sin and fail to see the possibility of change.

In I Corinthians 6 of the Bible Paul lists several sins: fornication, idolatry, homosexuality, stealing, and others. Then he says to those Christians in Corinth, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed. . . sanctified . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ."

The bottom line is that we can change, with determination and with a Master who really is the Savior.

Another Look At Paul

Continued From Page 3

He had other facts but not the right ones. But there is also another lesson here. That lesson is this; what one does not know can hurt him. It will not only hurt him, but it can cause great harm to others. Think for a moment what could have happened if Paul had never learned the truth about Christ. Suppose he had married and to that marriage children had been born. Then Paul would have been a husband and father. But he would not have known about Christ. Wouldn't that have an adverse effect on the lives of the wife and children in that home? You know it would. His lack of knowledge could surely hurt them. There could be spiritual damage done because of such.

Here is a good place to see the effect of misguided zeal. One does not doubt the zeal of Paul. In fact, he spoke of the fact of his "being more exceedingly zealous" (Galatians 1:14). But he goes on to tell us what he was zealous for. He was zealous for "the traditions of the fathers." We would take it that such meant the Jewish fathers, particularly those of the Pharisees.

Yes, he was zealous and zeal is to be admired. But that zeal can be misguided or based on a lack of knowledge. Didn't Paul have something to say about this later? If you will read the book of Romans you will see that he does. He was able to see this kind of thing in his own Jewish brethren. He will speak of desiring that they might be saved, and he will also say, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2). Paul could well identify with these folks. He knew of their zeal. He could see exactly what they were doing and how enthusiastically they went about their task. But, there was another side. He would also see just how wrong they were and why their zeal was

being wasted. They did not know what they should have known. All the time and effort they put into the endeavor would be in vain.

That same thing can be said of the zeal of so many in religion in our day. They may be zealous in door to door campaigns. They may give years of their lives as missionaries, but all to no avail for such is misguided.

II. THE HONESTY HE MANIFESTS

When one reads the record of Paul's life, he will be impressed with the man's total honesty and integrity. You will find him up front with all that he does. He is as honest in his opposition against the church as he was in his efforts for it after his conversion. Yes, he was honestly mistaken. He said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). Paul is here saying that he was doing what he thought he ought to do. You will find him saying, "I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day" (Acts 23:1). Yes, this is said long after he has obeyed the gospel. This is said long after he made havoc of the church. This means that when he did what he had formerly done, he did so honestly.

There is also another feature concerning his honesty. He never denied nor tried to cover up the fact that what he did was wrong after he learned that it was wrong. He will say, "Who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious" (I Timothy 1:13). You will find him admitting what he had done. That is the kind of man he was. But, there is another side to the matter. He would not plead that he was right because he was honestly mistaken. If you will read more of what Paul has to say to Timothy you will hear him saying, "I obtained mercy." That means he needed

mercy in spite of his honesty. What he did was just as wrong. He was still wrong in his opposition to the church of the Lord. He was not right in making havoc of the church even though he was honest in doing so.

III. THE HUMILITY HE DEMONSTRATED

If you have read the writings of Paul, you will know that he taught humility. He not only preached it but he also practiced it. This becomes evident early in the records of his activities. Yes, Paul could find a great deal in his background that could have engendered pride. He had things of which he could be justly proud. In fact, he recounted some of these to the church at Philippi . . . "Though I might have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:4-6). Yes, Paul could have been a man of pride. But he never allowed that which could make him proud to get in the way. When he learned he was wrong it did not take him forever to change. All you have to do is go back to the record of his conversion. He was a persecuting Pharisee on one day, three days later he is a penitent Christian.

There is also another thing of interest concerning his conversion. You will note from the record that Luke gives that he will speak of a disciple by the name of Ananias. This man lived in Damascus (Acts 9:10). He is the one that was to tell Paul what he was to do (Acts 9:6). He is the man that came to Paul to say, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of

the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Just think of this. Here is a student of Gamaliel, an avid Pharisee, a man with reputation among the Jews. But he will accept instruction from a dedicated disciple of the Lord. He is only concerned about doing what the Lord would have him to do. That was the bottom line to him. That is all he needed to know.

We all know that it would cost Paul to do what he was told to do. But have we stopped to think of what it would cost to not do what he was told to do? Suppose he had allowed his pride to stand in the way. Suppose he had, out of pride, held on to what he considered to be important rather than obeying the gospel. What would such cost him? Suppose his pride would not allow him to give these things up. Would they be worth what they would have cost in the time to come? There is not a person that would advise Paul to pay that kind of price. All would plead with him to give up those things that stood in the way. They would be right in making such a plea. Such is still the case with people in our own day.

IV. THE HELPER HE BECAME

As you trace the life of Paul you will find him moving rapidly from being one who caused havoc in the church, to one who became a great helper of the church. We are reminded of his vision at Troas where he saw a man saying "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9). It didn't take him long to decide to go, "and after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go" (Acts 16:10). Just think of the help he was to the souls of people in Philippi. Only eternity will be able to tell all the help he was to their life. What about the help he gave to the jailor? What about the little girl that possessed the spirit of divination? Every last one of these would tell you

that he had been a tremendous help to their lives.

But what about the help he has given to all of us through his writings? We can all verify that they have indeed been a blessing.

V. THE HOPE HE POSSESSED

Paul spoke often of his hope. Sometimes such would not be fully understood by others but he rested upon that fact. Paul said before Felix, "And I have hope toward God," (Acts 24:15). He says his hope is in Christ (I Timothy 1:1). This hope is the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19). This is the thing that would allow him to face the end as he did. It takes a man with a living, vibrant and stable hope to utter the words that Paul did to Timothy. Listen reverently to this great and good man, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day" (II Timothy 4:6-8). That is the way he died. That is the way his life ended. When we first saw him he was making havoc of the church. When we last see him he is dying for the cause of Christ as he is sustained by a great hope.

--Athens, AL

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 - "Most Of A Minute"
 - Authentic Preaching
 - If We Had But One Sermon To Hear
 - Problems To Blessings

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The Words Of Truth

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

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty Faith, And Works (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

It has been now some twenty-four years since I submitted my first article to WORDS OF TRUTH. The late and lamented Gus Nichols, a man I loved and esteemed as I have few other men, was then editor. I am sure across these years I have submitted close to five hundred articles to this fine weekly. For many years I wrote an article almost every week and scores of them appeared on the front page.

If the current editor of WORDS OF TRUTH, Glenn Colley, is willing and there is sufficiency of space for a series of studies, I propose to write several articles relative to these comprehensive words of the New Testament. Five of these are monosyllable terms; liberty is the only one of the six having more than one syllable. Yet as simple as these terms are and as clearly as Holy Writ has dealt with them, I doubt there are six other religious terms in all God's words more misapplied, misunderstood, or misapprehended than are these six.

Some Beginning Scriptures

To his Roman readers Paul wrote, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . ." (Romans 3:24). In that same context Paul wrote just a few verses later, "Where is boasting then? It is

excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:27, 28). The same inspired scribe wrote in Romans 8:2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In a duet of verses to brethren in Galatia Paul penned these concise statements, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love . . . Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ: (Galatian 5:6; 6:2). In Ephesians 2:8-10 the imprisoned veteran wrote his beloved brethren to the effect, "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." Paul penned these moving words to the precious people at Philippi in the early sixties of that first century of the gospel era, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but how much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). In I Thessalonians 1:3

Paul wrote, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." The inspired James, half-brother of our Lord in the flesh and his whole brother in the faith, wrote, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

How Men Today Treat These Kingly Words

In these passages previously quoted mention is made prominently of a number of key words in the New Testament. These words are grace, law, love, liberty, faith, and works. These are truly kingly terms; they are key expressions of the New Testament. Each one is a comprehensive expression. Biblical penmen did not misunderstand these terms. They did not misapply them or misappropriate them for improper uses. But such is not the case among many religious leaders today. We are living in an era when these words are greatly abused. We surely live in an era when grace is misunderstood. We live in an era when any and all religious law is nullified. We live in a time when love is abused, grievously and glaringly. Love

is used today in a conceivable way except Biblical way!! We live in an era when men want to spell liberty as license for the fulfillment of every lust of aroused flesh. We live in an age when faith is misappropriated and misapplied. Religious leaders by the masses in our day eliminate any and all kinds of works in the realm of religion. These are those who suggest that there exists a conflict between grace and law and therefore there exists no law today. As these lines are written in mid-April I am scheduled next week at Dyersburg, Tennessee, to give

entitled, "Are Grace and Antagonistic?" As I shall prove abundantly in this assigned lecture there is nothing but beautiful harmony between the grace of God and the law of Christ. There are those who claim to behold an insuperable conflict between law and love, between law and liberty, between faith and works. In some detail in this lengthy and needed series I want to examine these great words in the light of the Bible and show the marvelous and magnificent harmony that subsists among them.

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

Idol Of The Heart

Have you bowed before an image
Carved of wood or filled with gold?
Did you promise your allegiance?
Did you offer up your soul?

It may be as days of pleasure
Turned to years of selfish pride,
You have slowly built a "golden calf"
And love for God has died.

You will find your "god" goes with you;
And you bow at his request.
He takes charge of your emotions;
And then robs you of your best.

Through the years you have enshrined him.
Now he can't be torn apart;
And the idol holds your future
For you built him in your heart.

Cindy Colley

From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The "What's Happening Now" Doctrines

While having my automobile serviced last week a woman, who was doing the same, sat beside me. After learning that I was a preacher for the church of Christ she saw me as fair game for her speech on religious tolerance and the unattainability of truth. She made the following points:

1. Only young men these days are bold enough to speak their beliefs, because of their inexperience.

2. I should spend more time studying the worlds leading theologians.

3. One Baptist seminary accepted a million dollar donation, agreeing to sign a contract in the transaction that they would teach the beliefs of all major denominations, not just those of the Baptists. This was, in her view, the only wise decision for anyone in that circumstance.

4. We cannot know truth for anyone but ourselves. We should all work to have "spiritual understanding" of the scriptures, which may be different from someone elses understanding, and yet be equally correct.

5. What matters in religion is loving Jesus, worshipping in the spirit, and loving each other. Nothing else.

She asked if we had women preachers or if we still treated them like second class citizens. She rolled her eyes at my reference to the scriptures to show her shock and disgust.

One of her fellow Episcopalians entered the room and the conversation. He smiled and said that the disgruntled members of the church of Christ make the

best Episcopalians.

6. We should pay more attention to Jesus, and less to Paul.

When I noted that Paul was inspired, she explained that we are all inspired.

7. Each individual must adapt the Bible to fit the culture in which he/she lives.

As we were talking, and I was explaining what the Bible says to two very uninterested ears, it hit me: She has the same spiritual disease as do the proponents of the new "what's happening now" movement in the church of Christ! I've heard and read the same or similar arguments from those in the church who are now actively splitting the body of Christ in almost every city!

In the old time, believers of truth fought constant battles against idolatry. In the new time believers of truth fight battles against idolatry too. Now, however, it's dressed in clothes more culturally correct. Think about it: Men made idols because they didn't like the restraints God placed on them. They wanted freedom to do their own will. So, they made their own gods -- gods who let them do as they pleased without fuss (Jeremiah 1:16, Psalms 115:4-8). Is that different from this new mentality? The end result is the same. If I believe we cannot know truth for sure, and that everyone who claims connection to Christ is safe, I have simply developed another way to loosen the restraints of God.

The irony is that while the proponents of this new/old doctrine promise new freedom to the followers, the result is actually old

bondage in sin. Only in walking in the truth of Christ is there freedom.

Isn't it also ironic that the people of whom these folks are most intolerant are those who teach that the Bible is truth, and that we can study and know truth? Can I know all truth? No. We are always striving to grow in knowledge (II Peter 3:18). But that doesn't prove that I cannot definitively know ANY truth -- and that's what these people are saying.

I am going to stay with Jesus, Paul, John, and the other inspired writers of the New Testament on these and all major issues. Consider where they stand:

Matthew 28:20 -- "... 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."

Matthew 15:9 -- "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

John 12:48 -- "... the words that I speak, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Romans 6:17-18 -- "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."

II John 9 -- "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He hath abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

I John 2:3 -- "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments..."

"Bless You"

Allen Webster

He promised a safe landing, but not smooth sailing. He assured a winning race, but not without obstacles. He furnishes a rose garden, but roses have thorns. He sends a rainbow, but only when it rains.

The longer we run the Christian race, the more we see that it is going to be a struggle to make it to heaven. We ought not be surprised for this has always been the case. Those Christians who composed the seven Asian churches had to overcome overwhelming difficulties (Revelation 2-3). They faced social ostracism, political oppression, confiscation of property, loss of jobs and livelihood (2:9), physical abuse and even martyrdom (2:13). The Jews were against them (2:9). The Romans were against them (2:10). False teachers were destroying them (2:14). Pagan worshippers were seducing them (2:20). Plenty of obstacles!

Strikingly, Jesus did not promise to remove the persecution. In fact, He said it would get worse (2:10). But He always promised it would be worth it. His blessings always outweigh Satan's bullying. Notice a collection of the blessings promised those who overcame (Revelation 2).

TREE OF LIFE (2:7). Christians would again have access to the tree of life, which was last mentioned in Genesis 3:24. What man lost by sin in the Garden of Eden,

where apparently its fruit gave fullness of life and immunity to death (Genesis 3:12-24), is now restored in Christ to the one who overcomes sin. It symbolizes eternal peace, contentment, life and security (Revelation 22:2, 14, 19). "Paradise" denotes the parks of Persian kings and is used in the Bible for the Hadean place of rest (Luke 16:19-31; II Corinthians 12:1-3).

CROWN OF LIFE (2:10). God's people cannot be defeated! They may have trouble, but they are set for victory (II Corinthians 2:14). This victory crown or wreath was worn by the champions of athletic contests and the victors in war. It was a symbol of honor, glory and prestige. Smyrna was famous for such athletic events and her pagan priestesses wore garlands as they served in the temples. These were usually made of leaves or flowers and soon had to be replaced but the Christian's crown will never fade (I Corinthians 9:25; I Peter 5:4). "Crown" here (*stephanos*) is not a royal diadem (*diadema*) like Christ wears, but an emblem of festivity (Swete). It is mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament (II Timothy 4:8; James 1:12).

IMMUNITY TO THE SECOND DEATH (2:11). The unbeliever dies and finds another "death" awaiting him; the believer dies and finds eternal life. The first death (physical) is temporary, the second (separation from God

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Detect And Discern These Definite Declarations

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from Goebel Music's book Behold the Pattern. In a recent letter he gave me permission to mention and quote the book in the Words of Truth. I am pleased to say that this great book is about to enter it's

seventh printing! The book can be ordered from the author with this address: Goebel Music Publications 5114 Montclair Colleyville, TX 76034-5401 The price is \$5.00, plus \$2.50 for shipping. However, the book will be sent by the

author totally free to anyone who cannot afford the charge.

In this section, I just want to call our attention to one of the great facts of the New Testament. A fact that is presented so very distinctly, that it would be most difficult for the student who has the trait of nobility of the Bereans to overlook. As per the caption above, there are definite declarations revealed as we read the New Testament. These, as listed below, refer to that body of absolute, objective, attainable and unchangeable truth of God. I have already, in this treatise, made reference to such, but now we note some of those specific wordings.

1. *The faith* (Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 15:9; 16:5; 24:24; Galatians 1:23; 3:23, 26; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:23; 2:7, 12; I Timothy 3:9; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 21; II Timothy 2:18; 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:13; James 2:1; I Peter 5:9; Jude 3; Revelation 13:10; 14:12).

2. *The word of the truth* (Colossians 1:5).

3. *The teaching, doctrine* (II John 9-11).

4. *The word of the cross* (I Corinthians 1:18).

5. *The word of the message* (I Thessalonians 2:13).

6. *The word of God* (I Thessalonians 2:13).

7. *The truth of the gospel* (Galatians 2:5, 14).

8. *The truth* (John 8:32; II Timothy 3:8; 4:4; Titus 1:14; I Peter 1:22; James 3:14; 5:19).

9. *The word* (John 12:48; Acts 17:11; 20:32; Ephesians 5:26; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 1:14; 2:16; Colossians 3:16; James 1:22; I Peter 3:1).

10. *The word of reconciliation* (II Corinthians 5:19).

11. *The faithful word* (Titus 1:9).

12. *The word of his power*

(Hebrews 1:3).

13. *The engrafted word* (James 1:21).

14. *The gospel* (Romans 1:16; 2:16; 10:16; I Corinthians 15:1; Acts 14:7; Galatians 1:6-7; I Thessalonians 2:4, 8; II Thessalonians 1:8; I Peter 4:17).

15. *The word of prophecy* (II Peter 1:19).

16. *The gospel of the grace of God* (Acts 20:24).

This, as I have written before, is what a man is to preach (II Timothy 4:1-5), it is what an elder is to hold faithfully (Titus 1:9ff), it is what deacons are to keep in a

pure conscience (I Timothy 3:9), so they may have boldness in the faith (I Timothy 3:13) and it is what we are to commit to faithful men to teach others (II Timothy 2:2). If these things are not proclaimed, we betray the blood that was shed on the cross of calvary (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Revelation 1:5). Each of us needs again and again to be put in remembrance (II Peter 1:12-13, 15; 3:1) as there is always the possibility, and it just takes one generation to do it, to go astray, forsake God and to even turn unto idols (cf. Judges 2:6-14).

"Bless You"

Continued From Page 2

in hell) is eternal (Revelation 20:6, 14, 15; 21:8).

HIDDEN MANNA (2:17).

On their journey through a dreary desert to the land of promise, the children of Israel were sustained for four decades by manna (corn from heaven and angel's food, Psalm 78:24, 25); for them a table was spread in the wilderness. On our journey through the wilderness of trials and temptations, we are nourished by Jesus -- "manna" from above, "the bread of life" (John 6:31). He is our spiritual sustenance which the world cannot understand (cf. Philippians 4:7).

A WHITE STONE (2:17).

Pergamos engaged in the mining of white stone for commercial use. The stone symbolizes durability and white indicates purity. So together, they signify purity that will last through life and into eternity. Our salvation is written in stone!

There are four explanations of what this phrase means. Each has merit and perhaps all four are meant: (1) The white stone was given to a man who had been tried and justly acquitted. He carried it as a sign that he was free of the charge of crime which had been brought against him. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament, here and in Acts 26:10 where Paul said, "I gave my vote [literally, "my pebble of voting"] against them." (2) The white stone was given to a man who was freed from slavery and made a

citizen of this providence. He carried the stone as an indication of his citizenship. (3) The white stone was given to the winner of a race or contest as an indication that he had overcome opposition. (4) The white stone was given to a warrior returning from battle with victory over an enemy.

We can easily see how each of these would apply to the overcoming saint. We have been acquitted of our sins because Christ washed us clean in His blood (Revelation 1:5, 6; Acts 22:16). We were slaves to sin, but Christ emancipated us (Romans 6:13; John 8:32). We are in a race and one day will win a prize (Philippians 3:13, 14). We are defeating the devil in the battle for our souls (Ephesians 6:12-17).

A NEW NAME (2:17). Names are important to God. He will give us a name that shows that we belong to Him. A new name indicates an advancement in life -- Abram, Abraham; Jacob, Israel; Saul, Paul (cf. 3:12; 22:4). In the Old Testament, the high priest had the name "Jehovah" written on the front of his mitre (Exodus 28:36). This indicated that the priest was consecrated to God. In the New Testament, God's priests (Christians) have a new name, the name of Christ written on their foreheads (3:12; 14:1; 20:4; 22:4). It indicates that Christ has conquered them; He is their Ruler.

Christ is waiting to bless you. Hang in there!

"Most Of A Minute"

A 1959 Dad

The other day I came across a "Boys' Life" magazine from December of 1959. Most of the photographs were in black and white, and only a few in color. One advertisement in the magazine contained a picture of a boy and his father together holding a tool. The caption read, "For you and your dad at Christmas." Dad's spending time with their kids may, right now, seem to them trivial. But think -- the dads who spent those hours with their children in 1959 are now granddads. And the kind of fathers they were back then greatly influences the quality of fathers their sons have made.

Most fathers won't be able to leave their children a legacy of great financial wealth; but we can leave with them an example of a loving and godly father. Ephesians 6:4 says, "Father, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Authentic Preaching

Bobby Dockery

In reading the book of Acts again recently, I have been impressed anew by the explosive impact of New Testament preaching. Some listeners rejoiced; some resisted; but none simply ignored. At times, the message aroused bitter opposition. In Iconium the city was divided by the preaching of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:4). In Thessalonica, a great multitude of Greeks and leading men were converted

but the Jews rioted (Acts 17:4-5). In Berea many Jews believed but others stirred a mob into frenzied agitation against the Apostles (Acts 17:11-13). In Athens, some sneered at Paul's preaching but others joined him and believed (Acts 17:32-34). At Corinth, many believed but many others rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat (Acts 18:8, 12). The message of the early church met with intense excitement and hardened

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If We Had But One Sermon To Hear

Clifford Dixon

It has well been said that preachers, as dying men, preach to dying men. Some people heard their last sermon last Sunday. Others will hear their last sermon this week. If we knew that we had only one sermon to hear, what would we like that sermon to be?

(1) **We should not want it to be a sermon to sooth our itching ears, because this is not soul saving preaching.** This kind consists of fables, but not the WORD which will save our souls (II Timothy 4:1-4). The idea of everybody is all right, take your choice, or do what you think is right, is not the preaching of the apostle.

(2) **We should not want to hear a dramatic lesson with theatrical effects to stir our emotions, but having nothing for our intellect.** The great swelling words of vanity are characteristic of false teachers, but are really clouds without water (Jude 12-13).

(3) **We should want clear and plain preaching of our duty to the Lord without any effort made to spare our feelings.** This preaching should include the plan of salvation as found in the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47). This preaching should rebuke sin and compliment righteousness.

(4) **We should want Christ exalted as Savior and Lord.** This twofold teaching is what causes people to escape the pollutions of the world (II Peter 2:20). We should want to be challenged to receive Christ as Lord and to walk in Him (Colossians 2:6).

(5) **We should want to be challenged by this last sermon to greater love** (John 13:34-35); **greater works** (I Corinthians 15:58); **closer prayer life** (I Thessalonians 5:17); **more meaningful worship** (John 4:24); and to a **dedicated life of purity** (James 1:26-27).

(6) **We should want our shortcomings to be rebuked and our sins brought out so we would see the need of repentance** (Numbers 32:23; Luke 12:2; 13:3, 5). We should want exposed the things that are contrary to the will of God, such as the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). God holds us responsible if we do these things.

(7) **We should want all religious error exposed so we would not be guilty of practicing it.** We should want Paul's statement that if any other gospel is preached than that which he has preached, then let it be accursed (Galatians 1:8). The idea of "faith only" saving someone should be shown by James 2:17-26 to be false. The doctrine of "praying through" should be shown by Matthew 7:21-23 to be false. Any other false way must be exposed in the searchlight of the word of God.

(8) **We should want chapter and verse preaching from the word of God.** Peter's sermon on Pentecost day had quotations from Joel 2:28-32; Psalm 16:8-11; 101:1; and II Samuel 7:11-12 (Acts 2:14-36). Every sermon preached by an apostle or one the apostles laid their hands on, was chocked full of scriptures. They showed that the New Testament was the fulfillment of the Old Testament. They gave an authoritative gospel because they were inspired and they proved beyond a shadow of doubt what they said by the scriptures. The only authoritative preaching today is the unbiased preaching of the word of God.

(9) **We should want that last sermon to have a tender appeal to obey the Lord.** As Paul stated, "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11). On Pentecost day, Peter answered their inquiry with "repent and be baptized 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 he with many other words testified and exhorted them to save themselves from that untoward (crooked) generation (Acts 2:40). The Lord instructs his servants to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel men to

come in (Luke 14:23). The closing chapter of the Bible states, "And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take of the water of life

freely" (Revelation 22:17).

In short, if we had but one sermon to hear, we would want that sermon to include the TRUTH, the WHOLE TRUTH, and NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

Problems To Blessings

Garell Forehand

One of the greatest tests of our strength as individuals is the way in which we handle the trials of this life. The way we react to pressure is certainly indicative of the kind of people we are. Solomon told us, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10). Well, if the only advantage to standing up under the pressure was to be looked upon as being strong, we might wonder just how beneficial it would be. However, there are some concrete blessings that may come our way through the troubles we confront.

Conversion. Smooth times of plenty are really the times when we are least likely to make any changes for the better. Sometimes it takes a traumatic shock to our sensibilities in order for us to come to our senses. The prodigal son was enjoying his romp in the land of sin without any desire for correction until the troubles came. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want" (Luke 15:14). Due to his hitting the bottom, the young man who was lost came to himself, and was found!

Growth. Exercise is a means whereby we may increase our strength and capacity for performance. There are all kinds of exercise, including the exercise of our hearts by the appearance of trials in this life. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (trials);

knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3). We are made better able to face pressure through our weathering pressure.

Opportunity. "You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first" (Galatians 4:13). There is no telling what might have been the case had not Paul gotten sick on that occasion! He also

assured his brethren in Philippi that his imprisonment had opened several doors to the gospel. "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 1:12).

Troubles offer us so much more than occasions to complain. May God help us turn our problems into blessings.

--Cleburne, TX.

Authentic Preaching

Continued From Page 3

disobedience; with joyful acceptance and angry opposition; with serious study and outraged blasphemy -- but not with indifference! It was preaching which demanded a decision; it moved men to action; it provoked a response.

If our modern preaching does not arouse bitter opposition as did theirs, neither does it produce mass conversions as theirs did. In our desire not be offensive,

perhaps we have ceased to be evangelistic. Our craving for respectability and popularity can leave us so fearful of upsetting people that we don't really try to convert them! This is not a cry for ugliness, but for earnestness; not a call for mere controversy, but for the passionate evangelism which strikes sparks and fires men's souls. Let the world bless us or curse us, but not ignore us!

--Fayetteville, AR

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- We Must Follow God
- Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works
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- New Book

Volume 28 Number 51

(USPS 691-760)

The Words C Truth

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

We Must Make The Best Of Our Burdens

Elwood Holt

A complicated little device with which you can click the telephone on and off with your tongue has opened the door to a new life for paralytics. The mechanism makes it possible for the afflicted person to operate a phone solicitation service. Now by touching a plastic lever with the tip of your tongue you can automatically dial the number for you. How wonderful it is to have a device like this for those afflicted in this manner.

I wonder how you and I would react to such a condition as has faced these brave people for many years? Would we be anxious to go on and on and make our own way? Or, would we give up and remain at the complete mercy of others? Our country is great because it is made up of noble souls who never learned how to cry "Calf-ropes." And, old timers know that is an expression indicative of defeat and cowardice. Brave and courageous men find ways to overcome their handicaps. Many of the greatest services to our nation are being rendered by those who are physically retarded. But, their vision is unlimited and "necessity has to them

become the mother of inventions."

It is the same way with the Church of our Lord, too. People who serve God out of afflicted hearts seem to find a comfort that others never know. Burdens are not always a sign of God's displeasure. Many times they are a sign of His pleasure. He permits us to bear them for the good it will do us. He knows best, and knows that if we always have things as we want them, we will lose our humility and our capacities for usefulness. So burdens are often "blessings in disguise." They show us the world for what it really is, making us evaluate it properly, fall out of love with it and in love with the things that never fade away. This earth was not designed to be our permanent abode. It, one day, will melt with fervent heat. This is the destiny of this physical world. But, when this earth is gone, the beautiful world beyond the vale of tears will have opened up for the true believer. The record tells us, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," (Hebrews 12:6). If we receive not his chastisements, we are not true sons, declares the record.

But, this is important: there are many burdens of man's own making, and these are not a blessing. Dissipation, sin,

greed, covetousness, avarice, jealousy and a host of other short comings cause men to suffer things that they would not have suffered otherwise. These burdens, of our own making, will not be a blessing to us. Sin never brings good. It never gives life. It always, without an exception, brings death (Romans 6:23).

When we think of the paralytics, making a new life for themselves -- not willing to be at the mercy of others, we, with our good hands, good feet, eyesight, hearing, ability to talk, reason, act, and move about, should resolve in our hearts to serve God with all our hearts, souls and minds. Oh, let us use our wonderful faculties while we are in possession of them. What if they should be taken from us?

Jesus said, "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are already white unto harvest" (John 4:35).

There is so much work to be done and time is running out for us all. It is like an overturned bucket of water, which is soaked up by the earth in a few seconds and gone forever. Life is as a "vapor, that appeareth for a moment, then vanisheth

away" (James 4:14).

Let us use time in a profitable manner, for it is one of our most valuable

possessions.

Contentment of heart can be found today in one person and one alone -- the Lord Jesus.

Making A Difference

James Hicks

"Who do you say I am?" That was the question Jesus asked the disciples. The same question is asked of us today as we train our thoughts on the most important relationship of all -- our relationship with Christ.

We are involved in many relationships. We have friends and co-workers both in the Church and out. Both are the basis for important relationships. We have family relationships between parents, children and mates. All these relationships matter and we are keenly aware that we need each other. Each of us knows that we must work to make these more meaningful. In all of this there is one

relationship that matters more than the rest. It's the one that makes all of the others work; our relationship with Christ.

But we must know Him. Jesus, in answering a question in John 14, stated "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well." One place we can get to know Him better is in Bible Class. Not only will we strengthen our relationship with our Saviour, but we'll grow closer to our brothers and sisters too.

While writing this the thought just occurred to me; what if I knew as much about Jesus as He knows about me. Think it would make a difference? I do. See you in Bible Class!

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

The Greatest Gift Of All

He's called the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Messiah, the Bright and Morning Star, the Mighty Counselor, the Prince of Peace, and the Savior of the world. There are so many names and titles for the Anointed One, Jesus Christ. Isn't it profoundly amazing that He is also called, "the Gift"?

In this season of giving and receiving gifts our minds are on a good course to ponder the "unspeakable" Gift (II Corinthians 9:15).

This gift is needed. John 3:16, the golden text of the Bible, offers to us a Creator full of love for the inhabitants of His world. Love has never been expressed this way before, nor will it be again. The God, whose justice must be appeased, knew we didn't have the ability to pay the needed price. He paid the price for us. He gave His sinless Son. Thank God for

His unspeakable Gift!

This gift is practical. It fits perfectly. "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18). Through Jesus our daily needs are met (Matthew 6:33). Thank God for His unspeakable gift!

This gift will last. It must feel odd to talk with someone while reading their mind. Jesus, knowing the heart and life of the woman at the well, said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Because of sin, and the burden borne with it, our spiritual thirst would forever go unquenched without this Gift. In Christ

we drink from the fount of grace that will never run dry. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life" (John 4:14). Thank God for His unspeakable Gift!

As we begin the new year, it is my prayer that from our appreciation of the greatest Gift will spring a refreshed urgency to share this precious gift with others (Matthew 28:18-20). Sadly, many Christians have subconsciously given up on personal evangelism. They never speak of their King except to other Christians. Don't let that happen to you! Let's work together to be "soul conscious" -- ever conscious of the need in each individual life for the greatest Gift of all -- Jesus the Christ.

How Should A

Christian View Christmas?

Allen Webster

Editor's Note: After reading the following article, some might suggest that we should rejoice anytime people of our world are considering Christ, and I think there is some merit to that. However, we shouldn't go so far as to adopt the world's misguided design for showing honor to our King. You say, "putting up a nativity scene at Christmas is good because it honors Christ!" -- But would we be willing to put that imagined scene of the Master's birth in our yard in July? In April? Probably not, because the world has told us

that the time to be thankful for His birth is in December.

Nothing is more important than pleasing and exalting our Lord. Let's use good sense and caution in regard to these concerns.

We hear about this time every year that "Jesus is the reason for the season" and "let's put Christ back in Christmas." Often Christians ask, "How should I celebrate Christmas?" or "Should I celebrate it at all?" Since we are obligated to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh" (I Peter 3:15), this topic should

be studied.

Christians Must Not Celebrate Christmas As A Holy Day.

Paul addressed this issue with the Colossian church who had decided to celebrate religious days. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (2:16-17). The church at Galatia had a similar problem. "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

We Must Follow God

Pat Gibbons

"Moses my servant is dead: now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even the children of Israel . . . as I was with Moses, so shall I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee . . . Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest: (Joshua 1:2-7).

This passage gives the death of Moses, the commission of Joshua to be the new leader, and the basis of his success. Moses died and was buried according to the word of the Lord. A new leader was needed. Joshua, who had been the military leader was now to be the new leader. Note Numbers 27:15-23 and Deuteronomy 31:7-8. The point I am interested in now is the basis of the success of Joshua. His success was based solely in his obedience to the Lord. Note that he is "to do according to all the law" and that this obedience to the law is further described as: "turn not from it to the right hand or to the left." If Joshua was to succeed in the task before him, he must follow the Law of Moses, which was the Law of God.

Now the next question is this: "Was Joshua successful?" We have the basis of his success spelled out here, but how successful was he in his task as leader of the people of

God? The answer is known by all Bible students: he was highly successful. He led the children of Israel across the Jordan river. He led them in conquering the land. And he led them in dividing up the land and settling therein. Then when he came to the end of his life, he called the people together and reminded them of what God had done as well as his determination to follow the Lord. "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth . . . And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14-15). Note also his godly influence over the nation of Israel: "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31). Yes, Joshua was very successful, and the reason for it is that he followed the will of God. He did what God commanded: he followed God!

This principle is the basis of our success in this life. We must also follow God's will as revealed to us in the New Testament. We must not turn from it to the right hand or the left hand. To do such is folly, and will keep us from the promised home in heaven. We must follow God!



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Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works

(No. 2)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Editor's Note: If you miss any segment of brother Taylor's series, write to me, and I will supply the missing articles).

It is a real literary privilege on my part to continue the vein of thought that was begun in the last article and the first of a lengthy series on six critical, crucial words of the New Testament.

Are We Under A Law Today?

Quite logically, this is an excellent question to begin our thoughts together for this study. It should be obvious to every reader that I am not referring to civil law in this question. Jesus teaches in crystal clear language in Matthew 22:21 that we are to render to Caesar (civil government) that which belongs to Caesar and to God that which belongs to him. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that we are to be in subjection to the powers that be (Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13ff). Such is an allusion to the various governments under which the people of God would live from time to time. Our query therefore does not concern civil law. But it does concern religious

law. Has God placed us under a religious law in this the Christian age? Fletcher, father of Situation Ethics, was saying during the 1960's that for the Christian there are no rules, no regulations, no laws. Where is he during the 1990's? He is now a signer of Humanist Manifesto II which means that he has espoused Humanism, a sophisticated term for atheism. It is a short jump from a denial of God's law to a denial of God's existence. Fletcher took it in less than two full decades. Now some of our brethren are saying that for the Christians there are no rules and no regulations but only pure grace. Will some of our brethren, who are parroting in the 1990's what Joseph Fletcher said in the 1960's, someday be where Fletcher is now? They are headed that way in a big hurry when they begin to deny God's law.

Negatively Viewed

First, let us note the question from the negative side. It should be obvious to all that we are not under the edict of Eden. This was given to Adam and Eve as recorded in Genesis 2:15-17. That passage states, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to

dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." You and I have never spent a day of our life in the Garden of Eden. The charge to dress and keep it belonged to Adam and Eve, not to us. You and I have never been in the presence of a tree that contained the knowledge of good and evil. Hence, we are not under the edict of Eden. That is one of

the very cogent reasons why we do not share the guilt that was committed in that Garden. We suffer from the consequences but possess none of the guilt of what the first human couple did in the excellencies of Eden. Adamic or original sin is found in the creeds concocted by men but these sentiments are totally unwarranted by the word of God and the teaching thereof.

You and I today are not under the precepts of Patriarchy. It is certainly true that the patriarchs were under law. Paul makes this matter

crystal clear by writing, "for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Romans 5:13, 14). Had there been no law from Adam to Moses there would have been no sin or transgression. Sin is not imputed or charged to one's

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How Should A Christian View Christmas?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

by any means I have bestowed labor on you in vain" (4:10-11).

Since Christians seek to go strictly by the Bible (I Peter 4:11), and dare not tread ground where there is no Scriptural authority (Colossians 3:17), they observe only one religious holiday. God has set one day apart to memorialize, not the birth, but the death of His Son (I Corinthians 11:20-24). This day is Sunday (Acts 20:7). Christians rejoice in this "unspeakable gift" fifty-two times a year!

Further, we do not know the birthdate of Christ anyway. God did not choose to reveal it to us (perhaps because He knew people would want to celebrate it). The evidence seems to point to an autumn date (shepherds are not in the fields from mid-October until mid-March in Palestine). It does not really matter.

We need to remember that one who pursues the traditions of men worships God in vain. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). "Making the word of God of none effect through your traditions, which

ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:13).

Christians Should Avoid Leaving The Wrong Impression With The World.

Since our influence is so important in converting the lost (I Peter 3:1-2), it behooves each Christian to guard his carefully (Romans 14:21).

During this time of year we should avoid giving the impression that we are celebrating a religious holiday. Going about singing religious songs may be understood by us, but what do those of the world think? Cards sent by Christians with religious scenes also leave the wrong impression. Nativity scenes, obviously, should not be placed in our yards or houses. "Christmas plays" should be also avoided for the same reason.

Christians May Enjoy This Season As A National Holiday.

Christians observe many days set apart for secular reasons (July 4; Labor Day; Memorial Day, Valentine's Day). So a Christian is allowed to celebrate "Christmas," unless it violates

his conscience (Romans 14:23). This falls into the arena of Christian liberty (Romans 14:3-6).

Since our businesses give us time off, and since families can be together, it is a great time to build stronger homes. If there were ever a need for this, it is now. God is certainly for this (Deuteronomy 6:6-7), as are all godly parents (Ephesians 6:4), and spouses (Ephesians 5:25-29).

Christians do not have to cease to be happy in Jesus at "Christmas" just to be different from others. Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). He also wrote, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Romans 12:15). This would include Christmas as much as any other day. There is not enough happiness in the world anyway. We may give and receive gifts as easily on this day as any other. This is a good time to teach our children that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Go ahead, enjoy this festive time of year! Be thankful to God for all your blessings and joys, but be careful not to compromise the truth.

"Most Of A Minute"

Christmas Giving

Whoever observed our complicated society and called it the "ME Generation," didn't look at Christmas time. The chilly hand of selfishness that grips hearts becomes the warm touch of generosity during this special season.

I do suggest that some folks need to make a major decision relative to the character of a faithful Christian. You see, this spirit of giving in Christmas is very much like the unselfish attitude that faithful Christians manifest all year round.

Jesus taught us this truth very graphically in Luke 10. You remember . . . the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan had a heart bigger than his head. He couldn't mathematically show you how much dividend would be produced by helping the beaten, robbed traveller. He just knew that helping his fellow man was the right thing to do. Jesus said, "Go and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Let's remember that the spirit of giving, characteristic of this season doesn't have to stop when we put the decorations back in the attic.

Church Grinches . . .

Dale Jenkins

She came into the office with a handful of them -- complaints I mean. This "thing" had been moved from one place to another, and while she wasn't in charge of it, and the person who was in charge of it was the one who moved it, that didn't matter. There wasn't enough paper in the bathrooms, there never was. An announcement had been left out of the bulletin, even though she had not taken the time to turn it in. She wondered about someone in the hospital, and instead of checking on them herself, she griped that no one else had.

I'd met her before, she was the one who didn't think my preaching was biblical enough and the one who complained when too few folks came by to see her after she came home from the hospital. She was the one who didn't like the new pictorial directory, who thought the children ran too much in the building and the one who griped to the elders about every little thing she could turn into a big thing.

Church grinches. Just as the grinch thought he could steal all the joy out of Christmas, they believe they will take all the joy out of church life.

And, just as on Christmas morning, the people of "Who Village" all got up with long faces and momentarily were sad, we have our joy zapped out of us for a brief moment when these less animated, but more real, characters come into our lives.

But I watched that "favorite" of Christmas cartoons and learned something else. The problem with these grinches is that their hearts are too small. Their problem is a heart problem. Maybe Jesus had looked down through time and seen that holiday classic (though I know in reality He just knows hearts), for His words speak of the heart too. Listen in: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man" (Matthew 15:18). "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45).

But, my grinch friend, the grinch's heart grew and grew and grew, and your's can too (Proverbs 14:30), if you will but see love for the first time!

See God's love and intertwine your heart with His by drinking from His word: "... forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments" (Proverbs 3:1). "... Attend to my words . . . Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart" (Proverbs 4:20-21). And remember, a proper disposition can always help: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Proverbs 17:22).

Remember, the grinch fooled "Little Cindy Lou Who," but church grinches don't fool anyone but themselves: "If any among you seem to be religious, and

bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

"Now the end of the

commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Timothy 1:5).

New Book

I have just received and read a new book by Curtis A. Cates, The Second Incarnation: A Pattern for Apostasy. This paperback book of 55 pages is a scholarly treatment/review of a book written by Rubel Shelly and Randy Harris entitled, "The Second Incarnation."

I want to encourage our readers who are interested in Rebel's devisive movement to purchase this little book. While you will be shocked at some of the new arguments being made in this movement, you will be satisfied and encouraged by the fine way brother Cates applies the Bible to silence those arguments. The book can be ordered from: Cates Publications, 5512 Cotton-wood, Memphis, TN 38115. (Cost is \$3.50, plus \$1.00 S/H).

Glenn Colley

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works (No. 2)

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account in the absence of law. But there was sin, and plenty of it at that, in this period as the book of Genesis clearly teaches. Hence, the conclusion is inescapable that law existed during the patriarchy. Yet that law was not for you and me. As husband and father today I am not under a law that demands that I erect an altar and offer burnt sacrifices to Jehovah on high. The patriarchs did; but we are not under patriarchal law today.

We are not under the mandates of Moses today. God gave Israel a law from the summit of Sinai as the descendants of Jacob were on their way toward earthly Canaan, the land that flowed with milk and honey. The Ten Commandments or the Decalogue formed the foundation of that Mosaic economy. These were the ten pillars that formed its foundations or undergirded its superstructure. In the opening verses of Deuteronomy 5 the Sinaitic lawgiver makes it

crystal clear just who received that holy law from Horeb. He said, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying" (Deuteronomy 5:2-5). Israel's Sweet Singer had reference to this system and called it a law in Psalm 19:7 and declared it to be perfect, converting or restoring the soul. Concerning this law Hebrews 10:9 affirms that the Christ took "away the first, that he may establish the second." Ephesians 2:15 affirms that he "abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Without questioning or

quibbling to the contrary this has reference to the law of Moses. It was the middle wall of partition that long had divided Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14). Paul told the Colossians that Christ had blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; . . ." (Colossians 2:14). In Romans 7:4 we read where people have become dead to the law by the body of Christ in order that they might be married to Christ and produce fruit as a result of this spiritual union.

Therefore, we conclude that we are not under the edict of Eden; we are not under the precepts of the patriarchy; we are not under the mandates of Moses.

The next article, Number Three in this series, will approach the question positively and state precisely and exactly what law we are under during the Christian Dispensation, the gospel age.

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

Doing Right

Cindy Colley

Give me not swift solutions
Or conquests in the fight;
But rather give me peace inside . . .
To know I've done what's right.

I may win a trifling contest
If I merely do my part;
But if I "go the second mile";
I just may win a heart.

Let me surrender all but truth
To show someone the Light;
And then if he should turn away,
I'll know I've done what's right.

Let Christ be my solution,
No matter what the plight;
For nothing's really settled
Until it's settled right.

December 25, 1992

See Inside Articles:

- Making My Resolutions
- Taking Christianity To School
- Preaching The Word Of God
- Most Of A Minute
- The Prodigal Son

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The Words C Truth

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

Grace, Law, Love, Liberty Faith, And W (No. 3)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In the initial articles on this series (two of them) I sought to establish clearly from an appeal to Sacred Scripture that we are not under the mandates of Moses. But it is a curious type of logic for a person to acknowledge that we are not under these three law systems and therefore are under NO LAW at all! Such does not follow.

Consider for a moment a political illustration. There was a time when people in our country were under the laws of the Mother Country of England. Then there was a short time during the 1780's when our struggling country was under the Articles of Confederation. Today we are not under the dominion of England's law; we are not under the Articles of Confederation. But it would be a curious type of logic for us as American citizens to conclude that we therefore are under NO LAW at all. Simply because we are not under an abolished system such as the Articles of Confederation does not free us from the restraint of all law. Simply because we are not under an abolished law as given in Eden, to the patriarchs in the morning of time, or given from shaking Sinai to physical Israel thirty-five centuries ago does not remove us from all restraints and regulations of religious law. Why, you may be saying?

Well, here is the WHY!
The Bible Places Us Under Law

In crystal clear language the New Testament teaches that we are under law. That law is Christ's law, his dominion of regulation. In I Corinthians 9:21 Paul affirms that we are "under law to Christ." Paul again referred to this regulation as law in Romans 3:27 wherein we read, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." The law of faith is the same as the law of Christ. Some five chapters later in the profound Roman epistle the same writer says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Here the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the very same as the law of Christ or the law of faith. Paul in Romans 13:8, 10 talks about the law of love. He wrote, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law . . . Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." The law of love is the law of Christ, the law of faith, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The law of Christ is again spoken of in Galatians 6:2 as Paul wrote these words of weight and wisdom, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Since law is a rule of action Paul again referred to law when he penned, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16).

The inspired James referred to the Christian system as law. He wrote in James 1:25, "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." For those who imagine, rather vainly, that there exists a conflict between law and liberty we will allow them to wonder why James envisioned no such difficulty. He linked law and liberty in the same verse and in the same expression of that valiant verse. I have no problem with such a linking. Neither does any other REAL Bible believer. It is only those who refuse to believe what God said who discover some sort of imaginary conflict between law and liberty. The Bible, in no sense of the term, is responsible for such imagined difficulties. The law of liberty that James spoke of is the law of Christ, the law of love, the law of faith and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Without any controversy we are under the law of Christ during this the Christian dispensation.

The apostle Paul envisioned no difficulty between law and

liberty or between law, love and liberty. He wrote to the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage . . . For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another . . . Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (5:1, 14; 6:2).

Paul used the terms freely and saw no conflict at all.

The matter can be approached in another manner and will lead to the very same conclusion. Paul states in Romans 5:13 that "sin is not imputed when there is no law." Earlier he had written, ". . . but where there is no law, neither is there transgression" (Romans 4:15). Both of these statements simply mean that in the absence of law there is no such thing as transgression. Were there no speed limits imposed upon our network of highways and streets in this country, there would be no such thing as speeding violations. Before there was a Federal Income Tax Law in our nation there could be no violators of this civil precept. If God has no law for us, then there is no such thing as our sinning against him. If this is so, we might as well join those who are advocating the "no sin" society and help bring it into prompt reality.

But the Bible teaches there is sin today. In Romans 3:9 Paul says, ". . . we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they ARE ALL under sin . . ." (Emphasis mine-RRT). The present tense of the verb means that people during the time Paul wrote this epistle, the Christian Age, were under sin. The same is true with all responsible people during the twentieth century. Paul concludes in Romans 3:23, ". . . for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God . . ." The apostle of love, in the name of love, affirmed that sin occurs among all the accountable people of the world. He wrote in I John 1:8, 10, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Since there is sin in the world today, we conclude there is law in religion today. If not, WHY NOT?

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Making My Resolutions

It is time to remove the wrapping from the 1993 calendar and experience the feelings a new year brings. As we reflect on the past year mixed emotions swirl within us. We think of happy moments and sad, successes and failures. Then we consider the new year. It is fresh, untouched, and filled with hope and challenge.

This is a popular time of the year for resolutions, and I'm glad. It is healthy and right for folks to "examine themselves" (II Corinthians 13:5), and work to make corrections. James scolds those of us who would look in the mirror of God's word and then go our way without making resolutions to improve (James 1:23-24).

Consider the word "Repent." Repentance, closely akin to the making of resolutions, centers around change and improvement. The idea of repentance in the Bible involves however, other considerations worthy of our attention. In the original text there are two major words for our word "repent." One is *metamelomai*, the other is *metanoeo*. The very context in which these words are used will show that they vary in meaning, and the difference between the two is critical in our Christian lives.

Metamelomia means to regret an action, as shown in these verses containing the Greek word:

--Matthew 21:28, 29 -- "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in

my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went."

--Matthew 27:3 -- "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders."

--II Corinthians 7:8 -- "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent; for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season."

--Hebrews 7:21 -- "The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Psalm 110:4).

Metanoeo, according to Thayer, "is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral action and issues . . ."

It means to "change one's mind; to feel sorry that one has done this or that. It is "used especially of those who, conscious of their sins and with manifest tokens of sorrow, are intent on obtaining God's pardon. It means, "to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins." It suggests not only an emptying of wrong, but a filling of right. It means to quit doing wrong, and change to doing right. Consider these verses where this Greek word is found:

-- (Matthew 3:2) -- "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

-- (Matthew 11:20) -- "Then began He to upbraid

the cities wherein most of his mighty works we done, because they repented not."

-- (Mark 6:12) -- "And they (the 12) went out, and preached that men should repent."

-- (Luke 13:3) -- "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

-- (Luke 15:7) -- "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

-- (Luke 16:30) -- "And he said unto him, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

-- (Luke 17:3) -- "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."

-- (Acts 2:38) -- "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 17:30) -- And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

When making our resolutions this year to avoid specific sinful practices, let's make sure we don't simply cease the wrong. Let's cease the wrong, obtain forgiveness of our Father and those against whom we have sinned, and then fill our lives with goodness and righteousness.

Taking Christianity To School

Allen Webster

God never meant for His children to put on their "religion" with their Sunday suits and shiny shoes. Christianity was never meant to be for Sundays only, and the Bible is not just a book on church service parliamentary procedure.

Christianity is designed to go with us wherever we go. If we are at home, we are guided by the principles applicable there. If we go to work, our service there is governed by the Bible. When we are at play, our activities are determined by its pattern of modesty and morality.

If there is one place the Bible needs to be today, it is in our schools. Young minds need to be molded in the "image of God" (in whose image they were created) and not in the image of humanistic philosophy. Their teaching, relationships, activities and recreation are to be governed by the Bible. God did not give one "adult version" of the Bible to those eighteen and older and another for children. "One size fits all."

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHRISTIANITY GOES TO SCHOOL?

Young People Are Friendlier. The principles of the Bible make one more likeable. "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24).

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17).

Grades Improve. The Bible will improve a student's attitude and study habits. Instead of saying, "I can't," he will say, "I'll try." I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Instead of half-hearted stabs at assignments, the student will give it his best. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23).

Students Get Involved.

Teachers have no problems involving Christian students in wholesome activities. They are generally enthusiastic and energetic. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Christian Lights Shine.

Genuine Christians are not ashamed of Christ (Romans 1:16) and let others know that they are members of His church (Matthew 16:18). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father . . ." (Matthew 5:16).

Souls Are Won For Christ.

The Christian teenager realizes that school is a part of "the world" to which he is to take the gospel. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized

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The Words Of Truth

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Preaching The Word Of God

Elwood Holt THE WORLD NEEDS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

The world has had too much philosophy and not enough Gospel. The fundamental duty of the Church is to preach the truth of Christ. The Church is a preaching institution. But most people have forgotten this if they ever knew it. With some the Church has become a bazaar for the distribution of food and clothing. With some it is no more than a soup line, existing for the sole purpose of meeting out "loaves and fishes" -- with some it is an institution for the promotion of selfish interests. But with

the Lord it is the institution burdened with the responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 23:29 declares the Bible to be a "hammer and a fire" Paul in Hebrews 4:12 declares it to be "two-edged sword." A hammer has power to break -- a fire consumes, and a knife cuts. These figures accurately describe the power of the word of God over sin. But too many people in today's society want a hammer with a slick head -- a fire that won't burn, and a knife too dull to cut. The word of the Gospel is powerful when employed correctly. The Gospel is the power of God

unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Perverted it becomes a potion of death and destruction.

A fearful responsibility rests upon the Church as it preaches the truth. Falsehood never liberated a single soul from the bondage of sin. It never will. One can't warp falsehood up in enough sincerity to save a single soul. The truth of Christ is not compatible with error. Where truth is planted error is uprooted. There is too much preaching now about the Bible and not enough preaching from the Bible itself. An old preacher said to a young preacher once, "Abe, when you preach, always take a

long text: that much of your sermon will be right, whether the rest is or not." And friends, all too often, about the only meat a congregation receives is the long text anymore. Human hearts still cry out for the bread of life. Many have cried out for the "bread of life" only to receive a serpent. God's word, the New Testament, is sufficient. It is all the human heart needs for its present and eternal satisfaction. The word is not a dead letter as some claim. It is alive and active. It is sufficient for conversion (Psalm 19:7). It furnishes unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16, 17). It gives us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). We must neither add to it nor take from it (Revelation 22:18, 19). It is truly the creed that needs no revision. It meets the needs of the whole world (Matthew 28:19). It is pure (Psalm 11:140). It is perfect (Psalm 19:7). It is enduring (Luke 21:33). And we shall be judged by it (John 12:48). Our objections to human creeds are many: They are not inspired of God . . . they do not meet the needs of the whole world . . . they are not perfect . . . they must be revised every few years . . . we shall not be judged by them . . . they make void God's word . . . they teach things contrary to the word of God . . . and they are the main

instruments in keeping religious people divided. We plead for the acceptance of God's word.

Oh, it will be a dark day when gospel preachers -- true and faithful preachers -- substitute book reviews, current events, science, philosophy or anything else for the word of the living God. Over many pulpits in days of old were the words, "Preach the Word." Webster said when the preacher took his text from the Bible and preached from the newspaper, he preferred to stay at home. Might not this be the cause of so many empty pews today?

Many things the Lord commands us to do seem to be very foolish to some. In fact Paul, in the first chapter of I Corinthians discusses some things that men count foolish. But, he adds, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." He didn't say that foolish preaching pleased God, but the foolishness of preaching. There is entirely too much foolish preaching in the world today. People in Paul's day looked upon preaching as so much nonsense . . . some have the same attitude now. But the preaching was not foolish; men just looked upon it as being foolish. IT IS NEVER FOOLISH TO DO WHAT GOD COMMANDS. Oh "we" of little faith!

Taking Christianity To School

Continued From Page 2

shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). By his influence, others are brought to hear sermons and, by and by, baptized.

THE WRONG CROWD IS AVOIDED. The Christian realizes "evil communications corrupt good manners" (I

Corinthians 15:33) and he avoids bad company.

CHEATING IS ELIMINATED. When Christianity goes to school, the "cheat sheets" stay home! A Christian will no more steal an answer than he would someone's money. "Let him that stole steal no more" (Ephesians 4:28).

TEACHERS ARE RESPECTED. Christians respect the teachers' position and appreciate their efforts to better students lives. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1; cf. Galatians 4:1-2).

POPULARITY IS SACRIFICED FOR CHRIST. A Christian realizes that worldly people will pressure him to do worldly things, but he will not compromise his faith to be popular. He will not dance, drink, curse, vandalize, or commit fornication in order to have "friends." "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." (Romans 12:2).

CHRIST IS PUT AHEAD OF SCHOOL FUNCTIONS. Football practice, play practice and senior trips are not allowed to take the place of worshiping God or studying His word. The sponsors might as well not schedule them on Wednesday nights as far as Christian teenagers are concerned (Matthew 6:33).

Young people, take Christianity to school with you and watch great things happen!

Resolution Suggestions

1. I will read my Bible all the way through this year systematically.
2. I will seek to "mend the fences" in severed relationships.
3. I will not forsake a single worship assembly.
4. I will use my talents more to contribute to the growth of the church where I am.
5. I will have a family devotional every night with my spouse, and with my children.
6. I will make a list of five friends who are lost and make a deliberate effort to convert them to Christ this year.
7. I will be a serious promoter of the church -- in my conversations, public and private. I will build up the body, not tear it down.
8. I will pray before every meal, before I start my day, and before I go to sleep at night.

May God be glorified by our lives throughout this and all our years.

"Most Of A Minute"

Picture with me an unusual sight. A farmer is standing out in the middle of his freshly planted field of corn. "Not so unusual" you say? Well now picture him standing there begging those seeds to produce cotton instead of corn. Now that's ridiculous.

But now picture a sight that is perhaps more familiar to you. A preacher is standing behind the pulpit of a local funeral home preaching the funeral of a man who has lived his life away from God. The preacher is insisting that God will carry this one on home to heaven. Now which of these two situations would you say is the most ridiculous?

All farmers know that we reap what we sow. All preachers should know the same.

Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." Galatians 6:7 says, "we reap what we sow."

Let's remember today -- we will reap what we sow and that applies to farmers and non-Christians alike.

The Prodigal Son

Guy F. Hester

In Luke 15:11-32 we have recorded the story of The Prodigal Son. This is the last of three parables that Jesus gives in this chapter concerning that which was lost. In verses 4-7, we have the parable of the lost sheep. In verses 8-10, we have the parable of the lost coin. And in 11-32, the parable of the lost boy. Each of these parables gives us a picture of a different type of lost person. The sheep just wandered away from the shepherd and was lost because of his own carelessness. He had no intention of getting lost, but he was lost just the same. Many Christians just wander off into sin and are lost. They have no intention of being lost. They just momentarily take their eyes off of Jesus, the good Shepherd, and focus for a moment on their worldly surroundings, and before they know it, they are lost from Christ and the church in a world of sin and destruction. The problem is, too many times we are not leaving the ninety and nine. Paul said, "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" (Galatians 6:1). Just as in the parable of the lost sheep when it was found; when we have restored an erring brother ". . . joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). Two lessons should be learned: (1) we as sheep (Christians) should keep our eyes on the Shepherd (Jesus). (2) When one does wander astray through his carelessness, we should immediately go after him until we find him and restore him to the fold.

Next, in verses 8-10 we have the parable of the lost coin. While in some ways is like the parable of the lost sheep, yet it is different. The sheep was not lost by a deliberate choice to go astray nor was it lost because of the

carelessness of another. The sheep just unintentionally wandered astray. Now the point of difference in the parable of the lost coin is that it became lost through the carelessness of another. We need to be aware of the fact that others can be lost by OUR carelessness. Many parents are losing their children through their own carelessness (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). It is so sad to see children lost to their families and the Lord by the carelessness of their parents. But what is sadder still is that some of those same parents are not diligently trying to find them and bring them back.

Many elders are losing members of the flock that has been entrusted to their care and keeping. To the elders, Peter said, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof" (I Peter 5:2). Notice that the elders are to be the **OVERSEERS OF THE FLOCK!** How many elders really oversee the flock? Do sheep (members) often go astray because the elders are careless? How many services does a member have to miss before he is missed by the elders? When a member is A.W.O.L. (absent without leave) do the elders set about immediately to find that one and know what the problem is? Elders need to take heed lest through their own carelessness members of the flock entrusted to their oversight be lost (Acts 20:28, 29).

Members of the church, through the carelessness of their example, may cause one to be lost. Others are watching to see if we practice what we profess. We should heed the admonition of Paul to Timothy, "But be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). If one has been lost due to our carelessness, let us light our candle, sweep and seek diligently until we find that one and bring him back.

"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

Now to the subject of this article: **THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.** This story could just as well be called **THE PARABLE OF THE LOVING AND FORGIVING FATHER,** or **THE PARABLE OF THE UNLOVING AND UNFORGIVING BROTHER.** We could approach our study under any of these headings and learn some great and important lessons. However, if we consider, as in the other two parables, that which is lost and why it is lost, then I believe **THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON** to be the more fitting title.

The boy of this parable was not lost due to his own carelessness as was the sheep of the first parable. Nor was he lost due to the carelessness of another as the coin in the second parable. This boy **DELIBERATELY** went astray. Today, when a member of the church decides that he is going back into the world, deliberately turning his back on his Father's house and all the provisions that he has for us in the church, there is nothing that anyone can do to stop him, not the elders, not the members, not even his own family. This individual is guilty of **WILFUL SIN** (Hebrews 10:26). He knows what Christianity has to offer. He knows what is right and wrong. The trouble is, he doesn't care what is right and wrong any more.

When the younger son of the parable decided to leave his father's house and waste his substance in riotous living, there was no need for his father to try to stop him because his mind was made up to do evil. When we make up our minds to do evil our heavenly Father has already done all that he can do in sacrificing his Son for us (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29). All the power and sacrifice of heaven has gone into saving

us from sin and making us members of God's house and when we deliberately say to our Father, "I'm going to leave your house (the church) and go back to the world" our Father will let us go and do what we are determined to do. It will grieve him who loved us so much "that he gave his only begotten Son." He will long for our return but he will not force us to stay with him. Sometimes we have to wake up in the "hog pen" before we come to our senses and realize just what we have given up.

The world has its attractions and at best we are tempted. But Christians are warned not to love the world nor form friendships with the world (I John 2:15-17; James 4:4).

The father of the prodigal son did not stop loving him but he let him go. Just so, when we determine that we are going to do wrong, our heavenly Father does not stop loving us but he lets us go, even to hell if we do not "come to ourselves" and go back in penitence to the Father's house.

How much lower could this boy sink! Nothing could have been more degrading to a Jew than to take a job feeding swine. But now he is so hungry that he is about to eat with them. Then he remembers his father's house and that even the hired servants have plenty to eat. After he had come to himself he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Verses 18, 19). This shows us what true repentance is.

When his father saw him coming a great way off he "had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." He put a robe on his back, a ring on his hand, shoes on his feet and called for the fatted calf to be killed and for all to rejoice, thus showing the anxiousness and willingness of our heavenly Father to receive us back when we truly

repent.

Space will not allow us to discuss the "Unloving and Unforgiving" brother. Suffice it to say that his attitude is typical of some in the church who have difficulty in forgiving others. Instead of welcoming a wayward brother back into the Father's house, they want to make a "half brother" of him. They would make him continue to pay for his sins. If the Father forgives, then we have no choice but to forgive.

REMEMBER: (1) This boy deliberately left his father's house and wasted his substance in riotous living. Sometimes members of the church deliberately go away from the church. (2) When he made up his mind that he would not stay at home, his father let him go. Our heavenly Father will let us go if we decide that we will no longer stay with him. (3) In a far country he sank as low as he could go. When we go back to the world we sink as low as one can go in the muck and mire of sin. (4) The prodigal son "came to himself." Erring children of God need to come to themselves and realize their lost condition. (5) He repented. He turned from the filth of the hog pen back to his father. Erring children of God need to repent. Turn from the filth and mire of sin to the heavenly Father. (6) He confessed his sin. He said, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." He did not say, as I have heard some brethren, "If I have sinned." He knew that he had sinned and so do we. (7) His father forgave him and restored him as his son and wanted all to forgive and accept him. When a wayward child of God repents and confesses his sins our heavenly Father forgives and restores him to his family, the church, and he wants us to do likewise.

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