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## See Inside Articles:

- In Praise Of The Homemakers:
  - Psalms 113
  - Counting It Joy
- What About "Special Music" In The Worship? #1
  - God Is Faithful
  - "Most Of A Minute"
  - Teen Talk

Volume 30 Number 1  
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# The Words of Truth

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

## For Young Preachers

### Johnny Ramsey

We all need help along the way as we live for Jesus and His great cause. Older preachers taught me valuable lessons when I began to proclaim the glad tidings. They challenged me to greater heights and deeper insights. Four decades later it is now my opportunity to pass on advice to young men who carry on under the banner of the cross!

Recently it was my privilege to address the graduating class at a School of Preaching. The subject was Balance For Preachers. Here were the major points we stressed.

1. Look forward to heaven but pay your bills along the way.
2. Be loving and kind but never compromise Truth.
3. Put God first and never neglect your family.
4. Rebuke error but love the lost.
5. Point men to eternity but enjoy this life.
6. Be independent of brethren but grateful for them.
7. Be totally committed to Christ but never self-righteous.
8. Keep the church pure but love those who must be rebuked.
9. Remember that you are a preacher, not a policeman.

So many preachers have hurt the cause of the Lord by not paying their bills. To be honorable servants of God in any community we must take care of our debts. We are not special clergy demanding pre-

ferential treatment. Truth, proclaimed in love (Ephesians 4:15) should always be our goal. Caustic attitudes with unpleasant dispositions do not advance the gospel. When we convey the concept that it is a joy to "peel the hide" and "skin the sectarians" we tend to forget that Paul "labored day and night with tears" (Acts 20:). Preachers who do not pause to reflect upon their blessings and who do not seem to enjoy being a Christian can be a detriment to the church of the Lord. If Paul could rejoice in prison (Philippians 4:4) because he was serving his Savior, surely we can!

"There is sunshine in my soul today

and peace and hope and love.

For blessings which He gives me now

For joys laid up above."

Sadly, many preachers have neglected their families. God must come first in all of our lives, but a brilliant divine arrangement is the home. Our responsibility to provide for wife and children is set forth in many Bible passages. While we are striving to save others we will desire to reserve time and interest so that our home can be a foretaste of glory divine. Children are an heritage from the Lord (Psalms 127:3) and we do not want to stand in Judgment as one who failed to care deeply for the destiny of those in our trust.

Though we dare not depend upon brethren to the extent that we are compromised by their

wishes or weaknesses, we should certainly express our sincere gratitude for their support and encouragement. Too many evangelists fail to say thank you often to those who sustain them financially, emotionally and prayerfully. Some young preachers demand so much and give so little in return.

Totally commitment is scriptural teaching (Romans 12:1-2) but it must never produce self-righteous egotism in the soldiers of Christ. Serving Jesus was designed to make us humble and not arrogant (James 4:10). A

## Why We Believe In God

### W. A. Holley

This is an important lesson. We need to know that there is no God, if there is no God (John 8:30-32). Romans 1:18-32 discusses a people who refused to acknowledge God's existence. Read these verses to see just how far man falls when God is no part of his life. Evidence of God's existence is all about man: the heavens and the earth, the sun, moon, and the stars, the laws of nature, the seasons, seed time and harvest; all bear witness to Him who set these things in order.

"For every house is built by some one; but he that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4). Truly, no house has ever built itself.

Atheism assumes that there is

"cocky" preacher is worthless. Let us glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14).

Sometimes, sadly, we despair when those who have heard us preach do not immediately put into practice what was taught. We tend to try to enforce our message. But, thankfully, God wants us to preach the Word and not police the brotherhood! We can be deeply concerned when brethren refuse to follow divine precepts but remember: Even God does not force men to obey! He invites and implores and knocks at the door of men's hearts (Revelation 3:20),

but He does not force entry and twist arms. Every soldier in the Lord's army is a volunteer.

There is no greater work a young man can do than to spread the good news. Both God and the brethren will enrich and bless your life. Every day be sure to count your many blessings, pray for wisdom and go forth valiantly to a lost and dying world with an optimistic heart, filled with love for the souls of men. Persist in this endeavor and down yonder at the end of the way, you will have cause for no serious regret!

no God, but it can never prove that there is no God (Psalm 14:1; 10:1-4; 53:1).

"O Jehovah, 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). One cannot know God through human wisdom; it is only through divine revelation can man know God (I Corinthians 1:18-26; 2:6-16). Nature tells us that it must have had a Maker, but it does not reveal His will and way for man (Psalm 19:1-6; Acts 14:8-18). Paul recommends worldly philosophers to become fools that they may be wise (I Corinthians 3:18-21).

For a man to know that there is no God, he would have had to have lived forever. He would have to know all there

is to know. He would have to have lived in every place in the universe and out of it, because God might have been where man has never been. To put it another way, to know that there is no God, man would have been everywhere, seen everything, and know everything there is to know. It is absurd for one to say that he has been everywhere, seen everything, and knows everything. Hence, one cannot know that there is no God!

Man is not a creature of the evolutionary process; God is man's Creator. God gave man moral and arbitrary laws to guide him in his relation to man and to God Almighty. Man is not a dog or a cat; man is responsible for his actions

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## In Praise Of The Homemakers:

### Psalms 113

Glenn Colley

A woman in her twenties, who I had never met, once discussed a problem with which she and her husband were wrestling.

It was easy to say, hard to handle: He wanted children, she did not. It was that simple. She asked me about the Scriptures. Was she *required* to bear children?

I told her that throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New, God views motherhood and homemaking as a gift He gives to women. The position is held in high and sought-after esteem. Rachel cried, "Give me children or else I die!" Eve was commanded with her husband to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth..." The Proverb writer penned, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed" (Proverbs 31:28). Isaiah wrote, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?", and, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you (Isaiah 49:15, 66:13).

Unwanted children should not be conceived. However, I was troubled by the fact that this young woman had somehow suppressed the natural maternal female instinct and was sacrificing her happy home in the process. To her, *not* having children was that important.

I told her that God praises motherhood. Wives who do not want to be mothers do not learn the idea in the Bible. God's word teaches the opposite. We need God's guidance desperately today,

for feminism is gradually (and obviously) eating away at people's appreciation for what God says about the role of wife and mother in the home. Consider and embrace what God says about motherhood in passages like Titus 2:4-5:

"The older women to teach the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

Or, I Timothy 5:14, in the context of a discussion of caring for widows, Paul writes,

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

Young women, do you love the things God loves? Do you live the way He wants you to live? Notice that, according to these last two passages, living contrary to these teachings is described as blasphemy against God's word, and giving occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

The idea of motherhood and homemaking is belittling to some. It grieves the heart of God when a young woman is embarrassed by the question, "What do you do?", and she answers with head held low, "I'm a homemaker and mother."

Women should *PRAISE* God for homemaking! Women should *PRAISE* God for the honor of being a mother! Don't take my word for it, read from the inspired

word:

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord... He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 113:1, 9).

Let the world keep their low regard toward motherhood and homemaking. They have schooled our girls well in "I can't be fulfilled just caring for my home and children" attitudes. These last thirty years have changed our young mothers. But some things will never change. The need babies and young children have for their mothers to be close doesn't change. These sweet mothers and homemakers today are not God's down-trodden, but on the contrary, the ones to whom God has bestowed tremendous blessing!

The mother who rears her children in the way they should go is perhaps the most valuable teacher in any church. I believe that's what Paul meant when he wrote, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (I Timothy 2:15).

Our children are precious. They are gifts from our God. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of the... " (Psalm 127:3-5).

## Counting It Joy

Cindy Colley

It's not that trials pass me by  
And leave me unaffected;  
For I have felt the pain of loss  
And I have been rejected.

The storms of life have gathered round  
And filled my life with sorrow.  
And I, too, have looked helplessly  
At prospects of tomorrow.

Heartaches come to everyone  
And, finally, all will die.  
The difference for His children is...  
Our Father tells us why.

The trials make us stronger  
For the crosses that we bear;  
And fit us for the kingdom  
He's preparing for us there.

They give us more compassion  
For another soul that bleeds.  
They teach us how to empathize  
And fill a brother's needs.

They tell us of our wretchedness  
When we're without the Lord.  
They teach us to depend on Him  
And hope for His reward.

For those without the promises  
The trials bring naught but pain.  
But we can count it all but joy  
For heaven's ours to gain.

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# What About "Special Music" In The Worship? # 1

*Editors Note: This is the first article in a two-part series. Part two will appear next week.*

**David W. Hester**

Within the Lord's church, several congregations are employing "special music" (solos, choirs, etc.) in the worship. Several preachers, some who otherwise are sound, defend the practice. The denominations have practiced it for years.

When considering this question, one must ask: "What does the New Testament say?" Is special music authorized? Is it an expedient method of praising God in song?

First, we must look at the nature of worship. Worship involves both an attitude and an action. In John 4:24, Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Notice several things from this verse. The object of our worship is God. We are to have the right attitude of heart, as said in the word "spirit." Then, we must worship according to "truth," which refers to the proper standard, the Word of God (John 17:17).

However, some of our brethren would redefine "worship" and "truth." They would claim that worship refers only to an attitude, and it cannot be limited to certain acts or certain times. Truth, according to them, refers only to sincerity or genuineness, not a standard.

As the late G. K. Wallace once said, "If you allow a false teacher to create his own vocabulary, his arguments will be unanswerable." Or, as that noted scholar Humpty Dumpty once said, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."

The fact is, worship involves actions and times, and truth refers to the Word. In John 4:24, Jesus uses the word *proskuneo*, rendered "worship." Arndt-Gingrich define the term, "worship; do obeisance; bend knee" (716).

It's used 24 times in connection with worship of God in the New Testament, and 11 times in connection with worship of Christ. The Lord himself used the word three times in John 4:24!

The word *aletheia* is also used by Jesus. Again, consider what Arndt-Gingrich says: "the context of Christianity as absolute truth." Under this heading, they list both John 4:23f, and John 17:17! In addition, the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament concurs.

In both the Old and New Testaments, worship is limited to certain acts performed at certain times. In Genesis 22:5 and Acts 8:27, the Bible limits worship to certain acts at certain times! Also, there must be a purpose to worship. I Corinthians 14:15 says, ". . . I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sin with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

If one may do as he pleases in worship, then burning incense, instrumental music, rosary beads, and a host of other things would be acceptable. The fact is, the worship one offers must first please God, and not first please ourselves.

Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 set forth how the church is to worship God in song. That these passages are intended for the whole church assembled cannot be denied. First, the epistles are respectively addressed to the church at Ephesus and Colossae (Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:2).

Second, the plural participles used by Paul in both passages imply the whole church. In addition, the term "among you" indicates the whole church was addressed.

Third, the epistles were to be read to the church assembled! (Colossians 4:16; Ephesians 6:21-22). How in the world could the brethren in the two cities have gotten the idea that Paul intended for them to have choirs, solos, and the like? To

ask is to answer.

The brethren who push for "special music" in worship realize they cannot say it is demanded by Scripture, so they must defend it as an expedient method of praising God. However, a careful examination of the participles used by Paul in both passages suggest "special music" is not even intimated.

The participles *heautois* and *heautous*, rendered "one to another, each other," are reflexive reciprocal pronouns and imply an interchange of action. Such respected Greek grammars as Dana & Mantey, Machen, and Summers agree with this. In fact, Dana & Mantey give both passages as examples!

The nature of reciprocity is such that all those involved participate, but not necessarily simultaneously. However, all must participate, else reciprocity is not taking place!

Also, consider the context of both passages under scrutiny. In Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:16, there is a lead verb followed by a series of masculine plural participles. The participles, in both passages, take the imperative force of the lead verb followed by a series of masculine plural participles. The participles, in both passages, take the imperative force of the lead verb. They are similar in construction to Matthew 28:19-20, where a similar Greek construction is used. The action in both passages is not optional!

When one looks at the Lord's Supper, he sees immediately the consequences of advocating "special music." In I Corinthians 11, the command is given to individuals within the church at Corinth. However, all understand that one cannot let someone take his Supper for him! The command is discharged individually within the context of the assembly! In the same way, the command to sing is an individual action discharged through the context of the

assembly. One cannot allow solo singing without also allowing solo or small group partaking of the Lord's Supper! If not, why not?

The historical record unquestionably states that "special music" was not introduced until about the fifth century! It's interesting that the practice of instrumental music came in on its heels. Could it be that "special music" is the Trojan horse by which the instrument is introduced by some brethren? To be sure, many would deny that; however, given one or two generations, what would happen?

The next article will take up some arguments being made to defend the practice of "special music" in worship. I am indebted to Dave Miller of Brown Trail School of Preaching for much of the material responding to the practice; his booklet, *Singing and New Testament Worship*, is "must reading" on this subject.

May we all realize that we are to worship God, and not our own emotions and desires. When we all engage in fervent congregational singing, it's truly a blessing. May we all be faithful to God in all things.

## God Is Faithful

**Vance Hutton**

Jesus commands us to have faith in God (Mark 11:22). We could never be pleasing to God without believing that He is (Hebrews 11:6). Evidence abounds that God exists. Our world is a great argument for the Lord's existence. All things have to have a designer and the great world demands that God be its builder (Hebrews 3:4). The things that have been made speak out loudly for the Creator (Romans 1:20-21). God has not left himself without witness but has

blessed us with rain and fruitful seasons and filled our hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:17). He has given life and breath to all and in Him we live, move, and have our being (Acts 17:25, 28). Many things about God and my relationship to Him would not be known without the Bible. It is here that I best learn of His love, kindness, compassion, goodness, mercy, and long-suffering.

One great trait of God that I learn from the world around

Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**How would you define the word "pure"? A dime is silver, but it isn't pure silver, because turning it on it's side shows copper is mixed with the silver.**

**When we get a glass of water from the tap we don't expect it to be straight out of Mud River. We do expect it to be purified. "Pure" then, means, unmixed, or without foreign matter.**

**James talks about "pure religion" in 1:27:**

**"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit (care for) the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."**

**A Christian who isn't caring toward the less fortunate doesn't practice pure religion. Instead, he is somewhat mixed up.**

# God Is Faithful

Continued From Page 3

me and also from the Bible is the fact of God's faithfulness. Deuteronomy 7:9 refers to God as the faithful God. I Corinthians 10:13 makes reference to our Lord, "who is faithful." This principle is found before man was formed. God made the vegetable world with an inevitable law of faithfulness (Genesis 1:11).

His words to Adam and Eve were sure and faithful. Genesis 8:22 says as long as the earth remains there will be summer and winter, day and night, and cold and heat. Joshua said of all God had ever said, nothing had ever failed to come to pass. We can say along with Paul in Acts 27:25 that we believe that it shall be just as

the Lord has spoken.

The trait of faithfulness is seen each year in August, September, and October in this area by the migration of the small yellow butterfly south toward the U.S. border. I look forward each spring for the first butterfly. I always have since just a lad. A lesson comes to mind when I see the

yellow ones this time of year: God is faithful.

1) God is faithful in His promises: God is not slack toward his word (II Peter 3:9-10). Romans 4 speaks of his ability to perform His promises. His promises are precious (II Peter 1:4).

2) God is faithful in His conditions and warnings: The conditions and warnings are the Lord's words too. God's requirements of us to hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized must be met or we will surely receive what He has warned us of otherwise. We must be faithful or be

punished because His warnings are faithful (Luke 9:62).

3) God's faithfulness provides assurance: As we stand on the promises of God, there is peace, hope, and assurance. The fear is the solace in the storm. There is the unseen that lies beyond and above the seen and the temporal here. There is the endurance that is gained as we know what eternity holds.

God is faithful. My confidence is placed therein. A person of folly lives any other way. May the Lord richly bless you as you live in view of the faithful God.

## Why We Believe In God

Continued From Page 1

toward man and toward God (II Corinthians 5:10-11; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear" (Hebrews 11:3, ASV).

There are reasons which show reasonable men and women that God does really exist. We shall note--

(1) The theory of Atheism cannot be proven. Throughout history men have arisen who have tried to prove the non-existence of God, but they have all failed, miserably . . . Voltaire, Ingersoll, et al. One would have to be God himself to prove that there is no God!

(2) Reasonable men and women, boys and girls, believe in God because something Automobiles, watches, electrical systems, etc., cannot create themselves. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1-2). The explosion of the World Trade Center could never have blown its debris into a dictionary of the English language. Mind is superior to matter. Some superior mind must have created the heavens and the earth!

(3) The universe of which we are a small part exhibits marks of intelligence. Houses do not build themselves (Hebrews 3:4). Days and nights are of the right length. Seasons come at the right time. For our world light and darkness are very

much needs. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). Did blind chance bring all of this about? The face of a new baby represents God's promise of the future.

(4) Moral law implies a moral governor. There is such a thing as truth and error, right and wrong. Where did this moral law come from? It came from God. No dog or horse ever tried to make the world better, by building schools and hospitals. If one thinks about it, the Ten Commandments were written and promulgated for man's good. "Thou shalt nots" were written to promote morality among men (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-22).

(5) We should not be embarrassed because we believe in God. Actually we are in good company. Many of the great scientists have been believers in God: Copernicus, Galileo, Issac Newton, Thomas Edison, et al. Our faith should grow stronger until it urges us to submit ourselves to God in complete obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

(6) We believe in God and His revelation because they are scientifically accurate. Scientists argue that there are five basic facts, time, force, action, space and matter. Let us notice: "In the beginning," time; "God," force; "created," action; "the heavens," space;

"and the earth," matter. Please read Genesis 1:1-2. How did the writer of Genesis know these facts?

(7) We should believe the Bible because it is God's word. It is God's message from heaven (Ephesians 3:3-4; II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5). It is the only book that answers the most important questions of the human heart: Whom am I? Where did I come from? What is my duty toward God and man? Where am I going? Is there life after death? Is there such a thing as crime and punishment? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell?

Scientists can never answer these questions. By faith, the Christian answers these questions "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear" (Hebrews 11:3, ASV). Verily, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7).

Dear Readers, believe and obey God's truth today --

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## Teen Talk

This is a true story about a boy named Charles. Charles was reared in a Christian home, attending church services on a regular basis. Although his father was not always faithful, his mother was an excellent example of a dedicated Christian woman.

One day in the latter part of November, Charles, who was in the seventh grade at the time, was getting ready for school. As he was attempting to leave the bathroom, his father, a man of 62 years, was shaving at the sink, blocking the doorway out of the bathroom. At that moment Charles did something that he had never done before. He looked at his father and said, "Get out of my way, stupid." Instead of correcting him, Charles' father simply stepped aside and let Charles pass by.

As he was riding the bus to school that day, Charles' conscience began to hurt him terribly. He had been brought up to respect his parents, but he heard his friends talk about "my old man" and "my old lady," and he had allowed it to affect him. Before he reached

school, he had decided what he would do. As soon as he got home, he was going to apologize to his dad.

When he got home, his mother met him with the news that his father had suffered a heart attack that afternoon. He was in the hospital, but he was still alive. Charles didn't get too concerned, because his father had been in and out of the hospital for several years with heart problems. He decided that as soon as his father got home, then he would apologize to him. Then the call came. Charles' mother came into his room and told him, "Your daddy had another heart attack. He died a little while ago."

How do I know this story is true? My first name is Charles. My daddy was buried on Thanksgiving Day, 1967. It has been twenty years now, and still I think about the last words I ever said to my daddy, "Get out of my way, stupid." I've asked God to forgive me, but I wish I could ask my daddy.

--Copied - The World Evangelist

Be A  
Words Of Truth  
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January 7, 1994

See Inside Articles:

•The New Leaf

•Ten Resolutions

For Young People

•I Am The New Year

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# The Words of Truth

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

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## 1993 Index For Words Of Truth

|  |  |  |   |  |   |   |  |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| ABERNATHY, Charles T.<br>A Matter Of Taste (12-24) | ANNONYMOUS<br>A Tale Of Two Brothers (1-1)<br>America's Number One Drug Problem (5-7)<br>I Am The Bible (5-21)<br>What Great Men Have Said About The Bible (5-28)<br>The First Missionary (7-2)<br>Why Is The Bible Thought Dangerous? (7-2)<br>You, And Preaching (8-13)<br>10 Ways To Find Time To Read Your Bible (8-13)<br>Starving To Death (8-20)<br>Is A Youth Program Really Important? (8-27) | ANNOUNCEMENT<br>Personnel Changes In Austin, Texas (6-4) | BAILEY, M. Floyd<br>Run With Patience (1-22)<br>"Practical Atheism" (12-17) | BARNETT, Earl<br>Who Are The Offenders? (2-26) | BARNHILL, Bob<br>Especially For Young People (2-26) | BENSON, Mike<br>"Is Attendance Necessary?" (4-2)<br>"Who's In Control?" (5-28)<br>"Will The Earth Remain Forever?" (6-11)<br>"The Kingdom Established?" (6-25)<br>"Another Testament?" (7-23)<br>"Live On Earth Forever?" (7-30)<br>"Born A Sinner?" (8-6)<br>There Must Be Water (8-20)<br>Must A Congregation Have Elders In Order To Render Corrective Discipline? (8-27)<br>"Did Jesus Ever Condemn | Same-Sex Love?" (9-10)<br>How Did They Know? (9-17)<br>The Last Days (10-1)<br>"Lose His Soul?" (10-29)<br>"Name Of The Church?" (11-5)<br>"Doesn't She Have A Right?" (11-26)<br>Never Had An Opportunity? (12-3)<br>Never Be Sure? (12-10)<br>"Ice Tea Or . . . ?" (12-17) | BLEWETT, Tommy L.<br>"Providentially Hindered" (4-16)<br>The Source Of Faith (5-14)<br>Outstanding Service (12-10) | BROMLING, Brad T.<br>The 24-Hour Creation Days (8-20) | BROWN, David P.<br>Can A Mason Go To Heaven? (6-11) | BURNS, James D.<br>Our Obligation To Truth (4-16) | CHILDERS, Tom<br>The Precious Wives (3-19) | CHOATE, Betty Burton<br>To Be A Wife (4-9)<br>She Shall Be Called Woman #1 (5-21)<br>She Shall Be Called Woman #2 (12-3) | CHOATE, J. C.<br>Mission Contributions Should Increase Too (3-5)<br>Workers Desperately Needed In Sarawak (East Malaysia) (5-21)<br>Do We Need Change? (7-2) | CLARK, Jimmy<br>"Take Heed To Your Spirit" (3-12) | CLARK, Winfred<br>"An Attitude Adjustment" (1-1) | Mary (4-16)<br>When Calamity Comes (6-25)<br>"New, In Relation To What?" (7-30)<br>Things Related To Remission (8-6)<br>The Willow Creek Church (8-13)<br>Greater Things Of God (8-27)<br>"For Example" (9-17)<br>God's Word At Thessalonica (10-22)<br>"The Church," "The Kingdom" Are They Related? (11-19)<br>For What Did Our Lord Pray? (12-3) | CLARKE, B. J.<br>Christ And Cancer (1-8)<br>Jesus, The Balanced Teacher (1-15)<br>Christ Formed In You (2-12)<br>Called To Be Saints (2-19)<br>Jesus Wept (3-19)<br>Great Chapters Of The Bible: Ephesians 2 (3-26)<br>Christianity: A Public And Private Life (4-2)<br>20/20 Evangelism (4-9)<br>The Secret To Church Growth (4-16)<br>God's Amazing Grace (4-23)<br>A Vacation From Our Vocation (4-30)<br>What Can I Do About Abortion? (5-7)<br>Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light (5-28)<br>His Yoke Is Easy, His Burden Is Light (6-4)<br>God Bidden Preaching (6-25)<br>Don't Let Satan "Whoo" It Out (7-9)<br>Carl Sagan Uses The Design Argument (7-16)<br>Do You Fear The Lord? (7- | 23)<br>New Creatures Must Exhibit New Features (8-27)<br>What Can Wash Away My Sins? (9-3)<br>COLE, Leon<br>Faithful In Little (7-30) | COLLEY, Cindy<br>Until They Know I Care (1-8)<br>The Christian Mother's Prayer For An Unborn Child (1-29)<br>Till Jesus (4-9)<br>Peace (4-30)<br>Keepers At Home - Lives Of Distinction (5-14)<br>Sounds Of God (6-4)<br>The Mountain (10-22)<br>Doing Right (11-12)<br>Counting It Joy (12-31) | COLLEY, Gary<br>"Dear Father In Heaven, Give Me The Strength In The Coming Year": (1-8)<br>A Tribute To George W. DeHoff, Sr., September 20, 1913 - January 1, 1993 (1-29)<br>That Precious Institution Called The Church Of Christ (2-12)<br>The Occult Of "New Age" (4-23)<br>When We Miss Wednesday Nights (7-9)<br>Have You Placed Membership? (7-30)<br>"Shall We Sing?" (9-24)<br>Have You Placed Membership (11-5) | COLLEY, Glenn<br>The Authority Question (1-1)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (1-1)<br>Only When God Ties The Knot (1-8)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (1-8)<br>Kindness To The Dead (1-15)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (1-15) | Words Of Truth Index - 1992 (1-22)<br>Words Of Truth - A Paper Worthy Of Your Reading Time (1-22)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (1-22)<br>Rethinking Repentance And Remarriage (1-29)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (1-29)<br>Secrets To Healthy Worship (2-5)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (2-5)<br>The Disposition At Babel (2-12)<br>Were The Days In Genesis One 24-Hour Periods? (3-5)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (3-5)<br>The Meaning Of "Hearts Waxed Gross" (3-12)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (3-12)<br>"Obey Them Which Have The Rule Over You" (3-19)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (3-19)<br>The Lion At The Door (Genesis 4:6,7)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (3-26)<br>"A Sure Way To Avoid A Possible Disaster" (4-2)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (4-2)<br>A Transformation (4-9)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (4-9)<br>I'm Just About Jesus (4-16)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (4-16)<br>Attainable Truth (4-23)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (4-23)<br>What Does Sanctify Mean? (4-30)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (4-30)<br>"When I See The Blood" (5-7)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (5-7)<br>The Doctrine Of Christ, II John 9 (5-14)<br>"Most Of A Minute" (5-14)<br>The Myth Of The "Gay" |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

# 1993 Index For Words Of Truth

- "Most Of A Minute" (10-22) 30)  
 Fittly Framed Together (10-29) CRUMP, Charles  
 The Glory Of The Christian (7-23)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (10-29) (7-23) CRUMP, Peggy T.  
 The Humble Strong Ones (11-5) "Just Why Are You A Christian?" (8-13)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (11-5) Never Take Me Back There (11-12) DEFFENBAUGH, Don  
 "Most Of A Minute" (11-12) Don't Change The Message (11-5)  
 Pearls From Acts 8 (11-19) DUNCAN, Bobby  
 "Most Of A Minute" (11-19) 'Tis The Season (7-9)  
 That's Not Sin, Is It? (11-26) What Is The Church? (9-24)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (11-26) DURHAM, Ken  
 Bishop Mary (12-3) The Main Event (12-24)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (12-3) DYE, Ken  
 The Way (12-10) Do You Know Who I Am? (11-12)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (12-10) Last Minute Gift Reminders (12-17) EXLEY, Richard  
 "Most Of A Minute" (12-17) Three Important Questions To Ask Regarding Present-Day "Tongue Speaking" (12-24) Abortion Myths (4-23)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (12-24) In Praise Of The Home-makers: Psalms 113 (12-31) GIFFORD, Michael  
 "Most Of A Minute" (12-31) "We're Not All Like That" (8-13)  
 CORKREN, Cecil A Message From A Baby Boomer (10-15)  
 Who Is This Man Called Jesus? (1-8) GILREATH, Barry  
 A Scientist Debunks Evolutionary Theory (4-23) Heart Disease (5-7)  
 "Evil Men And Seducers Shall Wax Worse And Worse" (9-17) "Most Of A Minute" (12-31) GALLOWAY, Joe E.  
 Some Say Jesus Will Dwell On The Earth Again (11-12) Back To The Bible (7-9)  
 As Good As Good Can Be (12-17) Baptism For "A Scriptural Reason" (7-23)  
 COURINGTON, David Disasters As A Means Of God's Warning (8-20)  
 A Great Gift (2-12) GULLEDGE, Dennis  
 Dear Mr. Clinton (3-5) Preaching: Has The Change Been For Better Or Worse? (2-5)  
 What About Your Pathway? (3-19) HAMPTON, Gary C.  
 A Thankful Heart (4-16) Crucified With Christ (4-23)  
 CRAIN, Orin L. HARDEMAN, N. B.  
 "Slow Me Down Lord" (4-3) "Soft" And "Hard" Preachers  
 Continued On Page 3

## New Year For Words Of Truth

Glenn Colley

As we walk into a new year, I want to take just a moment to express appreciation to the important people who make THE WORDS OF TRUTH possible every week.

I want to thank our writers who send the results of their diligent study on paper. Their well written articles every week make concise, comfortable, and informative reading. They hold to the old paths in faithfulness to God and support of Christ's church. The paper could not exist without their efforts.

I want to thank the elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ for supporting me while I edit this great paper. They see, as do I, the importance of providing good Christian reading material to people young and old. Whether reading early in the morning with

that second cup of Maxwell House or late at night in bed with a dim light, they want the WORDS OF TRUTH to be interesting and insightful. Our goal is that it will be dependable material, worth spending the subscription rate necessary to purchase, and the time necessary to read.

I want to thank our proof-reader, Cindy Colley. I'm quite sure that Webster himself would loose a Spelling Bee to Cindy. She can spot a grammatical error from across a room! Her work is extremely valuable in producing a good paper. I don't want our readers to be distracted by petty errors. I want to make sure that the thoughts our writers wish to convey are expressed in the best possible way. By the way, Cindy is particularly suited for this position because she shares the same house with me.

I want to thank our secretary, Linda Harrison, for always being available to type, mail, call, copy, and handle the many other duties which arise to keep the paper coming on time.

I want to thank the Northwest Alabamian publishers, and especially Martha Burleson, our typesetter, for their consistent delivery of good service. The WORDS OF TRUTH has rolled from their presses for many years.

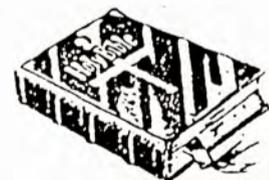
And finally, I want to thank you, our readers, for the encouragement you give to me through calls and letters, and by sharing the paper with friends. We intend to produce THE WORDS OF TRUTH as long as people are interested enough to subscribe!

May God again bless us with a great year.

Glenn Colley

# 1993 Index For Words Of Truth

- Movement (5-21)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (5-21) Should We Offer An Invitation In Our Assemblies? (5-28)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (5-28) I'm In The Club (6-11)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (6-11) Three Easy Arguments To Prove The Necessity Of Water Baptism (6-18)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (6-18) One Baptism (6-25)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (6-25) Happy, Productive, God-Pleasing Homes (7-2)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (7-2) Watching The Pendulum (7-9)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (7-9) Paul's Defiance Of The Gods (7-16)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (7-16) Make His Paths Straight (7-23)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (7-23) Matthew's Feast For Jesus (7-30)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (7-30) Three Usages For The Word "Church" (8-6)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (8-6) Focusing On Grace (8-13)  
 What's "That" In Ephesians 2:8? (8-13)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (8-13) The Sin Of Denominationalism (8-20)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (8-20) The Best Commentary (8-27)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (8-27) Dreamers (9-3)  
 Advice About Preaching My Dad Gave To Me (9-3)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (9-3) Jeff Walling On Unity (9-10)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (9-10) Not Under Bondage (9-17)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (9-17) Now, That's Shocking (9-24)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (9-24) Waxing In The Bible (10-1)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (10-1) Life's Incorruptible Things (10-8)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (10-8) The Criminal Cop (10-15)  
 From The Editor (10-15)  
 "Most Of A Minute" (10-15) What Baptism In Florence, Alabama? (10-22)



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# 1993 Index For Words Of Truth

- What Is The Difference? (7-16)  
**HARLESS, Dan**  
 The Man Who Had Everything (2-12)  
**HESTER, David W.**  
 Among The "Scholars" #1 (12-17)  
 Among The "Scholars" #2 (12-24)  
 What About "Special Music" In The Worship #1 (12-31)  
**HESTER, Guy F.**  
 Salvation (1-29)  
**HICKS, Tommy J.**  
 Who Said So? (8-6)  
**HIGGINBOTHAM, Steve**  
 Is The Church Of Christ Sectarian? (9-3)  
**HOLLAND, Tom**  
 Standing Firm Against The Winds Of Change (8-13)  
 Rewards Of Reading (10-1)  
**HOLLEY, W. A.**  
 What Is A Christian's Responsibility (1-15)  
 "Now It Is Different" (2-5)  
 Jesus Forgave Sins During His Personal Ministry (3-5)  
 The Elder Brother (3-12)  
 How To Identify The New Testament Church (4-2)  
 "Men And Brethren, What Shall We Do?" (4-30)  
 God, Christ, And The Spirit Dwells In The Children Of God (7-9)  
 The Divine Pattern In Worship (7-30)  
 Scriptural Condition Of Salvation (8-6)  
 Our Abominable Generation (9-10)  
 What About The "Christian Sabbath?" (10-29)  
 "Don't Fall Out Along The Way" (11-5)  
 "Accentuate The Positive, Eliminate The Negative" (12-10)  
 Why We Believe In God (12-31)  
**HOLT, Elwood**  
 Practical Christianity Only Kind To Save World (1-8)  
 'In Remembrance' (2-5)  
 Attend-Extend-Defend-Commend The Church (3-19)  
 We Are Standing On The Promises Of God (4-9)  
 The Question: Must I Be Baptized Into Christ? (4-23)  
 Christian Certainties (5-7)  
 The Bible Must Be Exposed To Our Lives (5-21)  
 'In Remembrance' (6-25)  
 It Isn't Enough To Say 'Be Good' (7-23)  
 What The Church Offers You (9-10)  
 The Answer To Our Soul's Needs Are The Things Of God (9-17)  
 Our Doctrine - Jesus Christ (10-1)  
 Jesus - The Hope Of The World (12-24)  
**HUSKEY, James E.**  
 A Growing Tendency (2-26)  
**HUTTON, Vance**  
 Taking Away The Anxiety (12-17)  
 God Is Faithful (12-31)  
**JACKSON, Bill**  
 Living Stones (7-16)  
**JACKSON, Wayne**  
 One Of Nature's Most Distinctive Designs . . . (1-15)  
 Should Christians Support The Salvation Army? (6-4)  
**JARRETT, Jeff**  
 If They Had Graves (3-12)  
**JENKINS, Dale**  
 David's Toe (1-8)  
 "An Argument In Favor Of Atheism" (1-29)  
 "The Rat Race" (2-19)  
 "Sleepy Confusion" (4-9)  
 Accepting Drinking By Not Rejecting It! (5-7)  
 A Father (5-21)  
 Thoughts On Gardening (From A Non-Participant) (5-28)  
 "One For The Road" (6-4)  
 I Love Older People (10-22)  
 Doing What You Can? (11-19)  
 Are You Bored By Science? (12-3)  
 Bill's Billboard (12-10)  
**JENKINS, Dan**  
 "Words & Ideas" (4-16)  
 Finding Truth By Instinct (9-17)  
**JENKINS, Jerry**  
 May One Be Baptized For The Wrong Reason In The Right Way? (2-12)  
**JOHNSON, Mary Ellen**  
 A Caring Cowboy (2-19)  
**JONES, Dempsey**  
 Can Adults Learn From Little Children? (5-28)  
**KELLEY, Rick**  
 For What Is Your Life (3-5)  
**KEY, Dalton**  
 Confessions Of A World-Filled Church (1-15)  
 The Substance Of Things Hoped For (2-19)  
 Poor Moses (3-19)  
 The Church - Perfect Or Not? (5-21)  
 A Word To Preachers - And Those Who Hear Them (7-23)  
 From The Inside Out (8-6)  
 The New Testament: A Pattern For Our Day? (9-3)  
 The Power Of The Press (10-22)  
 Forget The Bag (11-26)  
 Don't Believe Everything You Hear Or Read (12-10)  
**KILPATRICK, Marlin**  
 Judging Others (6-4)  
**KRUTE, Connie Lee**  
 Make My Mansion A Chateau! (9-17)  
**MAHAFFEY, Louis**  
 Because Of Love (8-20)  
**MANASCO, Jerri**  
 Shameful Giving (2-19)  
 The Word Of Judgment (4-23)  
 Paul The Failure? (4-30)  
 Shall We Decide! (6-18)  
 Dying In Sins! (7-16)  
**MAY, Cecil Jr.**  
 Church And Culture (9-10)  
**MAYHALL, Bill**  
 "An Argument In Favor Of Atheism" (1-29)  
**McDADE, Gary**  
 Keep Up The Good Work! (1-15)  
**MEADOR, Joseph**  
 Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part I) (10-8)  
 Must "Scholars" Or The "Clergy" Give The Official Interpretation Of The Bible? (Part II) (10-15)  
**MOORE, Billy**  
 What Makes The Church Of Christ Different? (8-20)  
**MORRIS, Gene**  
 Gideon -- "Who Looked To God" (12-17)  
**MUSIC, Goebel**  
 God Has A Pattern In The New Testament (6-18)  
**NEUBAUER, Holger**  
 Is Local Church Membership Just A Tradition Of Men? (11-12)  
 Be Thankful For Your Bible (12-10)  
**NICHOLAS, Sami**  
 The Beautiful Eyes Of Jesus (6-11)  
 Eternal Beauty Secrets (7-2)  
**NICHOLS, Flavil H.**  
 Singing During The Lord's Supper (7-2)  
**NICHOLS, Gus**  
 Which Way Does It Look? (2-26)  
 Our Mutual Love (4-16)  
**PATTERSON, Max**  
 Growing Up In Christ (8-6)  
 Is All Change Good? (11-5)  
 If The Bible Is Not A Divine Pattern (12-10)  
**PAYNE, E. Clifford**  
 "Workers Together With Him" (3-12)  
**PETTUS, Danny**  
 What About Homosexuality? (10-1)  
**POLLARD, Neal**  
 I Have Sinned (2-12)  
 Watching Love Work (3-26)  
 Laboring Lessons From Life (4-16)  
 Divine "Censurement" (5-14)  
 What The Blind Man Saw (5-28)  
 Nothing But The Blood (6-11)  
 The Other Mission Field In Personal Evangelism (6-18)  
 A Doctor And A Preacher (7-16)  
 Ineffective (8-13)  
 "Describe The Bible" (8-27)  
 Lessons From A River-Gathering (9-3)  
 Where Is The Power? (9-10)  
 The Gainsaying Of Korah (9-24)  
 Predestination (10-1)  
 "They Sent Unto Him . . ." (10-8)  
 A Matter Of Wills Vs. Wiles (10-22)  
 Are You In The Plains Of Ono? (10-29)  
 The Period Of Judges (11-5)  
 Martha, Martha (11-26)  
 Some People Believe And Some Do Not (Acts 28:23-31) (11-26)  
 The Lion And The Ant Or "What Shall We Drink?" (12-3)  
 The Fallacy Of Faith Alone (12-17)  
**POSEY, Glenn A.**  
 Pearls Of Truth (2-26)  
**RAINES, G. F.**  
 The Golden Rule (1-1)  
 Noah - A Righteous Man (1-29)  
 What Is The Source Of Happiness? (3-19)  
 Wisdom And Success (3-26)  
 Some Thoughts Concerning Unity (5-28)  
 A State Of Continual Becoming (7-30)  
 The Importance Of Friendliness (12-24)  
**RAMSEY, Johnny**  
 Secret Fraternal Orders (6-11)  
 Redemption's Sweet Song (10-22)  
 Living For Jesus (10-29)  
 What Is Christianity? (11-12)  
 Proof-Tests That Do Not Prove (11-19)  
 Our Record (11-26)  
 Shall The Bible Guide Us? (12-10)  
 The Courage To Stand (12-17)  
 For Young Preachers (12-31)  
 The Courage To Stand (12-17)  
**RICE, Tim**  
 Violation Of Autonomy (8-6)  
**ROY, W. Gaddys**  
 Salvation By Faith (2-26)  
 Leprosy, A Type Of Sin (7-30)  
 The Year Of Jubilee And The Gospel Era (8-27)  
**RUFFNER, Roelf L.**  
 The Fruits Of Sin (12-10)  
**SHANNON, Mrs. L. O.**  
 The Gospel Plan Of Salvation - Why Not From The Pulpit! (9-24)  
**SIMPSON, John**  
 A Timely Challenge (2-5)  
**SMITH, Clifford**  
 Commendation To The Faith (2-26)  
**STOUGH, Ron**  
 Times Change (4-9)  
**TAYLOR, Robert R. Jr.**  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #4 (1-1)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #5 (1-8)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #6 (1-15)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #7 (1-29)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #8 (2-5)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #9 (2-12)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #10 (2-19)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #11 (3-5)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #12 (3-12)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #13 (3-19)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #14 (3-26)  
 Grace, Law, Love, Liberty, Faith, And Works #15 (3-26)

# 1993 Index For Words Of Truth

- Faith, And Works #15 (4-2)  
Consequences Of Modernism (No. 1) (10-29)  
Consequences Of Modernism (No. 2) (11-5)  
Consequences Of Modernism (No. 3) (11-12)  
Consequences Of Modernism (No. 4) (11-19)  
Abortion, Safe For Whom? (12-3)  
VINSANT, Bernice  
Why Is It There? (12-24)  
WADE, David
- No Place To Hide (4-23)  
WEBSTER, Allen  
Improving Personal Bible Study (1-1)  
"Should All Religious People Believe The Same Thing?" (1-22)  
Mechanical Music In Worship (2-5)  
"Let Me Sell You Some Insurance!" (3-19)  
Tax-Free (3-26)  
What Can I Do As A Young Person? (4-2)
- "Somewhere A Child Is Crying" - Sexual Abuse (4-9)  
New Christians Need Your Help (4-23)  
Let's Build A New Church! (5-7)  
The History Of The Church At Ephesus In Time-Lapse Photography (5-14)  
"Don't Keep The Faith!" (5-21)  
"It Hath Been Said" (6-4)  
"Did God Approve Rehab's Lie?" (6-18)  
There Is A Generation (6-25)  
Baptism In 3-D (7-2)  
Storerooms (7-9)  
Watch For Snakes (7-23)  
"Get Lost!" (8-27)  
It's Time To Remodel The Church! (9-3)  
Growing Up In Sodom (11-26)  
WEBSTER, Wade Lec  
God's Picture Of A Preacher (9-17)  
WIGGINS, Stephen  
The Virgin Birth (8-20)  
Shall We Learn From History? (10-15)  
WINKLER, Dan  
"A Controlled Temper" (4-9)  
Dealing With Discouragement (11-26)
- WILLIAMS, Don  
"Unavoidably Postponed" (3-5)  
It's Time To Return To The Nest (5-7)  
The Power Of A Persistent Invitation (9-3)  
"Where Do You Draw The Line?" (9-24)  
WOODSON, William  
The Holy Spirit: Is He Responsible? (3-12)
- Concerning "Charismatic" Religious Leaders (3-26)  
WORKMAN, Gary  
Can A Faithful Christian Be A Member Of A Masonic Lodge? (6-11)  
7 Things Wrong With "Masonic" Doctrine (6-11)  
YEAKLEY, Dr. Flavil R. Jr.  
How Many Hairs Make A Beard? (10-29)

## The New Leaf

He came to my desk with quivering lip--  
The lesson was done.  
"Dear Teacher, I want a new leaf," he said,  
"I have spoiled this one."  
I took the old leaf, stained and blotted,  
And gave him a new one, all unspotted,  
And into his sad eyes smiled:  
"Do better now, my child!"

I went to the Throne with quivering soul--  
The old year was done.  
"Dear Father, hast thou a new year for me?  
I have spoiled this one."  
He took the old year, stained and blotted,  
And gave me a new one, all unspotted,  
And into my sad heart smiled:  
"Do better now, my child!"

--Author Unknown

## Ten Resolutions For Young People

1. I am resolved to keep myself clean -- clean of mind, heart and hand.
  2. I am resolved that my head shall rule my body and Christ shall rule my head.
  3. I am resolved that I shall not forget my exercise: Exercise my mind by good reading; exercise my soul by spiritual interests; exercise my body by wholesome recreation.
  4. I am resolved to live above the mob.
  5. I am resolved to develop lasting friendships by mutual interests, unselfishness and true affection.
  6. I am resolved to know God by studying His Word, His world and His works.
  7. I am resolved to be true to that higher self that I know I am.
  8. I am resolved to remember other people and treat them the way I want to be treated.
  9. I am resolved to play the game fair and clean -- both the game of the athletic field and the game of life.
  10. I am resolved to prepare for life, but to live life now, not tomorrow; to live every moment as a part of eternity; to live that moment according to the rules of the One who came that I might live abundantly.
- Central Point Church of Christ  
Central Point, Or

AS YOU CONTINUE TO REFLECT UPON the opportunities of this New Year, consider the following by Barbara C. Ryberg, entitled "Step by Step:"

*He does not lead me year by year  
Nor even day by day,  
But step by step my path unfolds;  
My Lord directs my way.  
Tomorrow's plans I do not know,  
I only know this minute;  
But he will say, "This is the way,  
By faith now walk in it."  
And I am glad that it is so,  
Today's enough to bear;  
And when tomorrow comes, His grace  
Shall far exceed its care.  
What need to worry then, or fret?  
The God who gave his Son  
Holds all my moments in his hand  
And gives them, one by one.*

## I Am The New Year

I am the new year. I am an unspoiled page in your book of life.  
I am your next chance at the art of living.

I am your opportunity to practice what you have learned during my past twelve months about life.

All that you sought the past year and failed to find is hidden in me; I am waiting for you to search it out again and with more determination.

All the good that you tried to do for others and didn't achieve last year is mine to grant, providing you have fewer selfish and conflicting desires.

In me lies the potential of all that you dreamed but did not dare to do, all that you hoped but did not perform, all you prayed for but did not yet experience. These dreams slumber slightly, waiting to be awakened by the touch of an enduring purpose.

I am your opportunity to renew your allegiance to Christ who said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

Adapted

**Visit Soon**  
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**Jasper, AL 35501**

January 14, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Some Remembrances  
Of Brother Woods
- A Great Soldier Goes Home
- Brother Guy N. Woods:  
His Greatness
- Guy Woods Comments  
On John 3:16
- Dear Father In Heaven

Volume 30 Number 3  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words C Truth

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

## Brother Guy N. Woods: 1908-1993

Flavil H. Nichols

Born September 26, 1908, in Vardeman, Mississippi, brother Guy N. Woods died Wednesday night, December 8, 1993, in Nashville, Tennessee, at the age of 85. He is survived by one sister, Annie Mae Bawcum, of Idabell, Oklahoma; one brother, G. Earl Woods, minister of the Lilly May church, Nashville; and by 2 nieces and 2 nephews.

I understand he was under medication for flu-like symptoms and for a kidney infection; and (possibly as a consequence thereof) he failed to turn off the engine of his car when he drove into his garage one night the weekend before Thanksgiving. Failing the next morning to reach him by telephone, brother Neil W. Anderson (publisher of the Gospel Advocate) investigated. He found brother Woods in bed, unconscious, and immediately summoned help. In the hospital Tuesday night, brother Woods was able for at least a short time to communicate rationally with his sister at his bedside. However she told me that he never fully regained consciousness, although I heard that he was moved into a nursing facility, where he died Wednesday night the week after Thanksgiving.

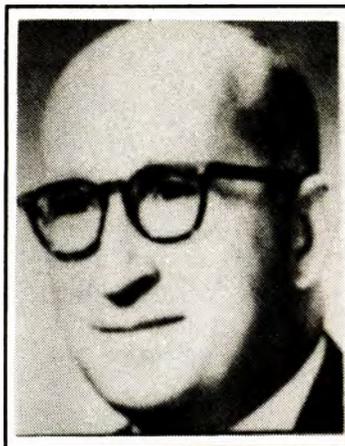
In the casket his body looked as it did 15 or 20 years ago! His body lay in state four hours Friday night at the Stockdale-

Malin Funeral parlor in Camden, Tennessee, and at the church building from nine until ten-thirty on Saturday morning. When Lazarus died, "many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother" (John 11:19) -- and Jesus was among those consoling friends, traveling some distance to be with them! I do not know who, nor how many, admirers spoke words of comfort and encouragement Friday night to brother Woods' brother and sister, "paying their respects" to this great soldier of the cross.

Brother Woods had written instructions for his funeral, which was held in the beautiful building of the church where he grew up, at Holladay, Tennessee. At his request, brethren Neal W. Anderson and Richard England spoke at his service. As the casket was closed, they were seated on the podium. Brother Lamar Nichols (the local song-leader) with four other vocalists beautifully rendered three stanzas of Each Step I Take, and (immediately -- without a pause) two stanzas of I Walk With My King.

As a young man brother Anderson often led the singing in gospel meetings where brother Woods preached. Now he is the publisher of The Gospel Advocate, for which journal

brother Woods has been a contributor for perhaps fifty years. He stated that brother Woods had lived "eighty-five wonderful years, sharing the problems common to man, and finding Bible solutions for them." Over the past fourteen years, their business relationship made it possible for them to be together daily, except when one of them was out of town.



Guy N. Woods - 1908-1993

He recalled the last time he and brother Woods drove to Holladay. Brother Woods showed him his old homeplace, and his parents' graves in the cemetery where he would be buried. He related that in his boyhood when he and six of his cousins "played church," Earl (G. E., his brother) would lead the singing, his cousin Will Holladay (who is now an Elder of the Holladay church, and was present for the funeral) would lead the prayer, and he, Guy N. Woods, would preach! Showing brother Anderson

the old "baptizing place," he explained that, when these loving cousins reached accountability, it seemed perfectly natural that all seven of them should go down to Sycamore Creek, where, on September 24, 1924, they together were "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3) by brother J. W. Grant.

Brother Anderson reminded brother Woods' sister that she had given up a brother whose very last words to her were: "I love you too, Annie Mae." What a precious memory this must be for her to cherish! He reminded brother G. E. Woods that he had lost, not only a brother in the flesh --and in the Lord -- but also a fellow gospel preacher!

In the death of Guy N. Woods, all of us have lost a true "Friend;" but brother Anderson stated that he felt as if he had lost a "Leaning-Post"! He regarded brother Woods as his "mentor," recalling that as they rode together brother Woods might comment on some Bible text, expound on some given situation, pay him a compliment -- or even rebuke him! Whatever was said, it was crystal clear that brother Guy N. Woods always wanted the truth to be taught and practiced. He loved the Cause of Christ, and with his whole heart he wanted the church of our Lord to be pure and "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Like millions of others, including Guy N. Woods, brother Anderson derived comfort from the beautiful twenty-third Psalm, which he read. He then read Revelation 22:14 which speaks of the "Blessed" dead -- whose ranks we believe brother Woods has now joined. Stating that the following text applies to all of us, he then read: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The same quintet of singers next expressed our Bible-based hope in the beautiful song, In The Sweet Bye And Bye, after which brother Richard England spoke.

He and brother Woods had become especially close friends during the past fifteen years, and brother Woods requested him to speak. Brother England referred to the fact that when brother Woods was baptized, he was baptized "by faith," trusting in the grace of God to save him when he obeyed the Lord who said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The salvation here offered by the Lord is salvation "by grace" and "through faith" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Brother England stated that

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Some Remembrances Of Brother Woods

Glenn Colley

Because of his tremendous work and influence for good in his generation, I have devoted this entire issue of **WORDS OF TRUTH** to Guy Woods. I hope you will enjoy the reading and will want to tuck it under the cover of one of his books in your library to save.

While I realize that my relationship with brother Woods was one enjoyed by hundreds of other young preachers, please humor me as I reminisce.

While I preached for the East Hill church in Pulaski, Tennessee, brother Woods held a couple of Gospel meetings. The twenty-five minute sermons were rich and practical. One evening, before the worship began, he and I were sitting together in the church's library visiting when I told him we should be making our way to the auditorium. As we walked I said, "Brother Woods, I will be

introducing you tonight. Tell me your topic so I can announce it at the opening of the service." He calmly responded, "Brother Colley, I never decide my topic until I see my audience." You can imagine the impression that statement made on a twenty-five year old preacher!

Although people who kept their distance might not realize it, brother Woods had a healthy sense of humor. During the last "Open Forum" in which he answered difficult Bible questions at the Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship, he concluded his remarks at the end of an answer by saying "... and anyone who can't see that is a pin-head!" He also told a good joke that day and brought the house down with laughter.

I understand from my father that one of brother Wood's favorite television shows was Gunsmoke, and

his favorite character was Festus.

I understand from my mother that she and brother Wood's used the same sourdough bread recipe. He enjoyed baking bread.

Brother Woods was so useful in the kingdom because his mind was so keen in confronting error. Three years ago, as we sat eating lunch with one of my elders, he bemoaned the new liberal movement and its proponents. He said, "Their one redeeming value is that they will wax worse and worse until ANYONE can see them for what they really are." He grieved over the recent splitting of churches and the false doctrines which were so often to blame.

Brother Woods was a gracious gentleman, a fine Christian, and a mighty defender of the truth. I will miss him.

## Brother Guy N. Woods: His Greatness

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Brother H. Leo Boles frequently said that "brother N. B. Hardeman is no ordinary man." The same can be said of brother Hardeman's illustrious student. "Brother Guy N. Woods was no ordinary man." Words like average, ordinary or mediocre would be misplaced if attached to the noble name of the wise and wonderful Woods. He was great and extraordinary in the truest meaning of these tremendous terms.

HE WAS GREAT  
IN DEDICATION

He grew up in a strong Christian family where dedication was prized. Early in youth he remembered God, obeying the gospel as a teenager. He preached his first sermon a few days after he was born into the family of God. From that day onward the dye was cast. The strong current of developing dedication grew deeper as the years came and went. He was dedicated to study, preaching,

debating, writing, editing, helping people and seeking answers for every question men might ask him relative to the Bible.

HE WAS GREAT  
IN TALENTS

Some men are efficient in one field. Brother Woods was efficient in many fields. Few men have ever filled the pulpit with the power and dignity he wielded. His choice of words and flawless usage of the King's language were

Continued On Page 3

## A Great Soldier Goes Home

September 26, 1908 - December 8, 1993

Gary Colley

Our beloved brother and friend, Guy N. Woods, passed on to his reward on Wednesday, December 8, 1993, following a few weeks of a comatose condition induced by monoxide poisoning. Memorial services were conducted on Saturday, December 11, at Holladay, Tennessee, where he had begun his work of preaching sixty-seven years previously.

Brother Woods was born in Vardeman, MS, September 26, 1908. He was baptized into Christ by brother J. W. Grant, in August 1926. He attended Freed-Hardeman University, where he returned in later years to conduct the "Open Forum" for many years. This highly popular Forum was of great help to the school and the church through the faithful stand always taken by brother Woods. The books of his answers given in these forums will continue to live in the lives of faithful Gospel preachers for as many years as the Lord delays to come!

Brother Woods was a highly talented speaker, writer, debater, and helper of many. To say he conducted himself as a gentleman is an understatement. In local work, as the staff writer for many brotherhood papers, as editor of the Gospel Advocate for many years, as writer of

commentaries, or as debater (conducting over 100) and preacher, his talent shined brightly. Few men have been his equal and none his superior in these areas. So much of his time was devoted to Gospel meeting work. He conducted about 35-40 per year. All were saddened to learn that he was having to curtail his meeting work as he approached his eighty-fifth year.

Truly a prince and great man has taken his leave from us. But we rejoice for him that he finished the course, having kept the faith, and will now enjoy the rest promised to the faithful!

To each member of his family we offer our sincere sympathy. We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for allowing us to have known such a valiant soldier, and pray that others will rise to the challenge of taking the torch and filling the huge void our friend has left in the church on earth!

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# Guy Woods Comments On John 3:16

--From his commentary on John

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. -- This wonderful verse has often been called, and not without reason, the *Golden Text* of the Bible. The blessings it offers are all superlative. In it we are told of the greatest giver (God), of the greatest gift (his only begotten Son), of the greatest measure (the world) and the greatest future blessing (eternal life). It is a refutation of Atheism (it begins with God); of agnosticism (it reveals God), of Calvinism (it extends God's provisions to all the world, and not to an arbitrarily selected few), of Unitarianism (it establishes the deity of Jesus and shows him to be of the same nature as God), of Oneness Pentecostalism (it demonstrates God and Christ to be separate and distinct persons), of Universalism (it reveals that men will perish who refuse the way of escape) and the doctrine of denominational creeds which allege that Jesus died that God might love us whereas this teaches that Jesus came to the earth and made salvation possible *because* God loved us (Romans 5:8, 9).

It is often said by those who reject the doctrine of baptism for (in order to) the remission of sins that this passage does not mention baptism, and instead offers salvation merely and solely on the basis of believing. But neither does the passage mention repentance. If because John 3:16 does not mention water baptism it is to be rejected as a condition of pardon, by the same token we must reject repentance as well because there is as much said about baptism in it as there is of repentance. If to this the objection is offered that repentance is elsewhere made essential to salvation, as indeed it is (Acts 17:30), so also is water baptism in water (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3, 4; I

Peter 3:20, 21). We have seen that it is the *positioned* believer (the believer *in him*, v. 15), that is promised eternal life and we are "in him," only if we have been baptized *into* him (Romans 6:3).

For a discussion of the significance of the phrase, "only begotten Son," see comments on John 1:14. See comments on John 5:24 for the phrase "eternal life."

The "world" which God

loved and so loved as to give his only begotten Son, is the world of mankind, often rebellious, full of iniquity, wicked and cruel, lost and without God and without hope apart from the gospel. It is the wondrous marvel of the ages that this world God is said to have loved, and to have given his Son to die for rather than to have annihilated it in one stroke of destruction.

Salvation is for all; the offer

in the word "whosoever" is unlimited; God's part is wholly sufficient; and that all men will not finally be saved will be due to no failure on the

part of God but because some men simply will not accept his marvelous offer (Matthew 13:14, 15).

*Faithfully yours  
Guy N. Woods*

## Brother Guy N. Woods: His Greatness

Continued From Page 2

breath-takingly beautiful to hear. He graced the pulpit like a prince and with kingly demeanor. He was peerless on the polemic platform. He gave a new dimension to debating. He was fair with his opponents and fearless in his dynamic defense of truth when it was under attack. He had no peer with a pen. He could paint pictures with his marvelous mastery of words. He wrote with wonder and wisdom punctuating each well chosen word. He had a reservoir of words that captivated his avid readers. The English language became his servant in writing on topics stately and sublime. He had no close peer in answering questions. He fit an Open Forum situation better than any glove ever fit a human hand. His expertise was evident to every beholder.

### HE WAS GREAT IN REPUTATION AND CHARACTER

Like Paul commanded Timothy to be, brother Woods was an example of believers in word, manner of life, love, spirit, faith and moral purity (I Timothy 4:12). He was well reported of among all Theophiluses - lovers of God (Acts 16:2; 1:1; Luke 1:1-4). He was a pattern of good works; in doctrine or teaching he exhibited uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity and sound speech (Titus 2:7,8).

He was great in character. Reputation is what men deem us to be; character is what God knows us to be. Out of the abundance of the heart

flows the great issues of life. His life was an open door of an inward character of sobriety, righteousness and holiness. He was a modern Nathanael - "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47). He was as great in character as he was in intellect and talents.

### HE WAS GREAT IN SCHOLARSHIP

Had he lived in Campbell's day President James Madison surely would have classed both of them as the ablest expositors of scriptures of their day. Had he been a preaching and writing contemporary of J. W. McGarvey, surely the London Times would have classed both of them the ripest Bible scholars of their era. I know of no one in this century that had his grasp of Biblical knowledge. Superb describes his scriptural scholarship.

### HE WAS GREAT IN SERVICE RENDERED

A modern computer would be heavily taxed to do justice to the numerous ways he rendered service to his peers. He went where duty called whether the salary was commensurate with what he conferred or not. It is doubtful he was EVER overpaid. What he performed with a pen, in a pulpit, on a polemic platform or in an Open Forum setting could not be squared with silver or compensated with a check. He once told me of traveling to a distant point to render a service. He was paid \$300.00 for the week. His plane fare was \$297.00! The thousands of letters he wrote

in answering difficult Bible questions were labors of love. No checks of compensation accompanied such and were by him never expected. He was as selfless in service to God and man as ANY man I ever knew.

### HE WAS GREAT IN HUMILITY

An avid admirer once said of the princely Hardeman, "He is great without realizing it." The same was true with the beloved Woods - great without realizing it. After a very lavish introduction of him on one occasion he arose and said something like this, "Introductions like this are like sweet-smelling perfume - good to smell but not to be swallowed!" Humility marked this marvelous man with a precious plus.

### HE WAS GREAT IN FAITH

A weak, doubting or little

### The following is from an interview with Guy N. Woods, FHU Today, March 1992

#### Q. Please give a brief biographical sketch.

A. I was born on September 26, 1908, in Vardeman, Mississippi, a lumber mill community in the north central part of the state, where my father, who worked for a large lumber company, had been temporarily transferred. When I was five months old, my parents returned to Holladay, in West Tennessee, about fifty miles from Henderson, their permanent place of residence, where I grew up and completed my high school work.

#### Q. When did you obey the gospel and by whom were you baptized?

A. I was baptized on August 24, 1926, in the clear and limpid waters of Sycamore Creek, a lazy little stream which flowed

faith did not mark the brand of vibrant, victorious and valiant faith he marvelously maintained for sixty-seven years of Christianity lived, breathed and proclaimed. Great was his faith in the Glorious Godhead and its precious product - the Holy Bible.

### HE WAS GREAT IN FRIENDSHIP

He loved his friends and knew how to be a true friend to each of them. Like lovely Jonathan toward David he strengthened the hands of his friends in God (I Samuel 23:16). It was easy to be good when in his presence. He was the type of friend before whom one could think aloud.

### CONCLUSION

He has given us all an elevated dimension of true greatness. He personified in fine fashion Mark 10:43, 44.

alongside the community of Holladay, during a meeting conducted by an aged, beloved and venerable preacher and professor -- brother J. W. Grant retired, at that time, so I recall, from the Nashville Bible School. A number of others were also baptized on that occasion.

#### Q. Where, and under what circumstances, did you preach your first sermon?

A. On September 26, 1926, my 18th birthday, and one month and two days following my obedience to the gospel, in a small rural congregation a few miles from Holladay, Tennessee,

Continued On Page 4

# Brother Guy N. Woods: 1908-1993

Continued From Page 1

our deceased brother was characterized by a fervent love of truth, and by a driving quest for the knowledge of all the truth he could grasp. Throughout his life, he wanted to share with others as much as possible of that truth which he learned. Hence, not only orally, but also with the pen, he sought to pass on to others the vast storehouse of information which he had so painstakingly gleaned.

Perhaps no contemporary man in the Lord's church has written as many books as brother Woods wrote. For more than a third of a century he wrote the Adult Gospel Quarterly in the Gospel Advocate Sunday School series. Many years he wrote also the Annual Lesson Commentary for that series. Brother England revealed that shortly before brother Woods died he completed a revision of the ever-popular People's New Testament With Notes, originally written by B. W. Johnson, and popularly referred to as "Johnson's Notes." He wrote several volumes in the Gospel Advocate Commentaries On The New Testament. For many years he conducted an "Open Forum" in the annual lectureships at Freed-Hardeman University; and in two volumes entitled "Open Forum" he summarized the most important questions covered. Many of his sermons also have been published.

Brother England related that wherever brother Woods went, for meetings, or other engagements, he took with him, not only his own typewriter, but also his own table, and his own chair. In the most unfamiliar surroundings detract his attention from what he was writing! Thus in motels, or in private homes where he was a house-guest, he was in familiar circumstances, sitting "at his own desk," writing books of sermons, Sunday School lessons, and commentaries.

As an evangelist, brother Guy N. Woods was one of the most highly visible preachers

among us. For nearly two-thirds of a century he was in great demand. His revivals across America took him from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and from coast to coast. In many congregations he repeatedly was invited back.

Perhaps no other gospel preacher of his time engaged in more public religious discussions [debates] than did Guy N. Woods. He upheld what the Bible teaches, and relentlessly opposed and exposed the doctrines and commandments of men. "Without an ounce of personal animosity," said brother England, "he could forcefully and with intensity press his points most effectively." Several of brother Woods' debates were put in book form, and continue to do good.

His lack of personal ill-will toward the men he debated was illustrated by brother England with an incident which occurred during his 1946 debate with Nunnery, a Baptist, right there in Holladay, Tennessee. After one session, brother Woods in his car overtook his opponent as he walked home. Stopping

his car beside the pedestrian, brother Woods offered him a ride. But when Mr. Nunnery saw it was brother Woods, he refused to ride with him! Brother England revealed that some with whom brother Woods debated the "Orphan Home" and "Church Cooperation" questions have in recent years come by his office to visit with him.

Brother Woods wanted brother England to relate how some other men have influenced his life. He said brother N. B. Hardeman wielded one of the greatest influences on him. Brother Hardeman demonstrated a most unusual speaking ability. He took simple Bible truths, simple gospel sermons like those in the Hardeman Tabernacle Sermons, and presented them with such clarity and power that even the secular newspapers took

notice of them.

He regarded brother G. C. Brewer as a "genius" at giving an explanation of a Biblical text.

Foy E. Wallace, Jr., who also influenced brother Woods in his studies, was described by him as an "original thinker." He spear-headed the fight to keep the fanciful theories of premillennialism out of the church.

Brother Woods admired and highly esteemed Alexander Campbell, who, in the early nineteenth century overcame much prejudice to arrive at truth which most people then had not discovered.

He praised Moses E. Lard as one of the greatest scholars in the American "Restoration" movement.

Brother Woods thought that perhaps no man in America had a better grasp of Bible truth than did J. W. McGarvey. His "Original Commentary On Acts," as well as other books, had tremendous influence on the growth of the churches of Christ.

"But of all men, past and present," said brother England, "brother Woods loved brother Gus Nichols." They could (and did!) disagree on some Bible teachings [such as, the present abode of the dead and how the Holy Spirit dwells in us, FHN], but were still the closest personal friends. He preached in numerous revivals at Jasper where Gus Nichols lived for forty-three years, and where he served as one of the Elders for a long time.

Brother England referred to a recent series of sermons brother Woods delivered at Obion, Tennessee. He preached sermons which he thought to be most significant, and heading the list was a discussion of the Bible as the word of God. He drew practical lessons for today from The Rich Young Ruler, and presented other sermons he deemed to be vital in our world today.

"The death of Guy N. Woods

leaves a great void in the church," said brother England. Another -- or others -- must now rise up to lead the fight against ignorance and sin. Another -- or others -- must be able and willing to take a firm stand for God's eternal truth. In this brother Woods set an example for all to imitate.

After reading I Thessalonians 4:13-18, brother England dismissed the assembly with prayer. He and brother Anderson preceded the casket down the aisle, followed by the family, and then the audience, as the quintet sang: "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

At the grave in the nearby cemetery, brother Anderson stated that brother Woods read his Bible every day, right up to the end. "Let us continue that today" -- and he read to us I Corinthians 15:51-58.

Next, brother England referred to the many years brother Woods conducted the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman's annual Lectureship. He stated that brother Alan Highers has ably succeeded brother Woods in that capacity; and it is fitting that brother Highers dismiss us with prayer -- which he did.

I have no way of knowing either who, or how many, called on the family at the Funeral Home. But in addition to his fleshly brother (G. Earl Woods) I recall seeing the following preachers at the funeral: Neal Anderson, Paul Brown, Curtis Cates, Charles Chumley, Cecil Corkren, Bobby Duncan, Garland Elkins, Richard England, E. Claude Gardner, Sam Hester, Alan Highers, Malcolm Hill, W. D. Jeffcoat, Earnest Laws, Keith Mosher, Sr., Flavil Nichols, Tim Rice, Milton Sewell, Robert Taylor, Jr., M. H. Tucker, Paul Wilmeth, plus about ten students enrolled in the Memphis School of Preaching.

As a Bible student, evangelist, author, editor, and debater, the name of Guy N. Woods ranks among the greatest of this century.

Brother Neal Anderson told me before the funeral that, after he was 75 years old, brother Woods 'upgraded' his computer three times! Our vast brotherhood is bereft of a valiant and effective servant of the Lord. Guy N. Woods was also a "gentleman" of the old school. We mourn his passing in the faith that he has joined the ranks of the "blessed" dead (Revelation 22:14).

The love that he had for my father was reciprocated by the entire Nichols family! At a banquet celebrating brother Woods' eightieth birthday, one of my brothers wrote a page-long poem praising him. When brother Woods' spirit arrived at the portals of glory, I like to think that both Daddy and Mother were on the 'Welcoming Committee' if they have such things up there!

--Route 9, Box 541, Jasper, AL 35501.

**The following is from an interview with Guy N. Woods, FHU Today, March 1992**

Continued From Page 3

where I had secured an appointment, I preached my first sermon. It was, of course, a juvenile effort, and with but little edification - I think it lasted about 15 minutes or so -- but as a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, so this was a humble and inconsequential beginning of a commitment from which I never wavered, and that would continue for nearly two thirds of a century throughout the land. In the ever circling years which have come and gone since that to me, at least, historic occasion, many events of similar character have necessarily moved in and out of my mind as others came in and replaced them but, as a maid never forgets her ornaments nor a bride her attire, a preacher never forgets his first attempt, so deeply etched forever in my memory are those dear and distant days of initial effort, the extent of which I could not at that time have possibly foreseen.

January 21, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Paul's Class On Unity  
Among Christians
- The Greatest Question
- A New Man Desires  
A New World
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Rapture

**Volume 30 Number 4**  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## A Dozen Things That Will Help America In 1994 (to. 1)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

(Proverbs 14:34).

In two articles I wish to suggest some intense imperatives, that, if accepted and executed all over our beloved country, would make for a better USA during the new year we have just entered. Number and noted they are:

**(1) Respect For God  
And His Word**

This should be on the front burner for all our people. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, wisest of the ages, sought to find what was good for the sons and daughters of men to do all the days of their lives. He sought satisfaction in the same realms as people still do all over America. Over each promising fountain of promised pleasure he had to write ultimately, "for all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 2:15, 26; 3:4, 16; 6:9). Finally, he was led to write, "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). In Acts 10:34, 35 Peter taught the household of Cornelius that fearing God and working righteousness are the grand essentials of finding acceptance with the God of heaven. Too many in our country are like those of Romans 3:18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Such is sad, inexpressibly so. Righteousness still exalts a nation and sin is still a reproach to any people

Disrespect for law and order is one of the besetting sins and crimes of our day. Jesus taught respect for civil law when He said to render to Caesar the things belonging to Caesar and to God the things that belong to God (Matthew 22:21). Paul and Peter both taught respect for civil law in Romans 13 and I Peter 2:13-17. Parental authority must be respected if we expect to please God (Ephesians 6:1-3). We must respect city, county, state and Federal forms of authority. There needs to be a return of respecting the teacher and principal in the school system. There needs to be respect of the employee for the employer, the one who hired him and pays his salary. Above all we need to respect God and His authority in our country as a whole.

**(2) Respect For Duly  
Constituted Authority**

God is the God of peace (Romans 16:20). Christ is the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6). Christianity is the gospel of peace (Romans 10:15). Peacemakers are blessed; peacebreakers, by implication, are cursed (Matthew 5:9). Peter wrote, "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (I Peter 3:10, 11). Peace is sorely needed in a society where there is so much hatred

and hostility.

**(3) Strive For Harmony  
In The Home**

There is far too much conflict between marital mates, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters and among those of lesser kin such as in-laws, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. Household harmony would do much to curb the high number of divorces annually. Christ In The Home will insure household harmony. More than twenty years ago I wrote a book on marriage and the home bearing that very title.

**(4) Strive For Harmony  
In The Home**

Character is what we are on the inside; it is what we are in

the dark; it is what we are when alone; it is what God knows us to be. There has to be something to build on and when there is no real character, there is no foundational base upon which to build.

**(5) Righteousness In Heart,  
Head And Hand**

Righteousness is right-doing; it is conformity to God's word; it is commandment-keeping as per Psalm 119:172. We need to be righteous in attitude and action, in motive and mission, in language and life.

I came across this statement a number of years ago. I do

author else I  
ve him credit.

Its states, "There is no peace in the world because there is no order in the nation. There is no order in the nation because there is no harmony in the home. There is no harmony in the home because there is no beauty in the character. There is no beauty in the character because there is no righteousness in the heart." There is much food for thought here for all of us!

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

## The Church At Antioch

**B. J. Clarke**

The church in Antioch may be one of the lesser known churches of the New Testament era to the average Bible student. Yet, a close examination reveals that the church at Antioch was one of the greatest churches of Christ that ever existed. Why is this so?

**I. The Environment Of  
The Church At Antioch**

The city of Antioch was founded in 301 B.C. by Seleucus Nicator, ruler of Syria, and it was just one of sixteen cities that he named after his father, Antiochus. Antioch was under Roman rule and was the third largest city in the Roman empire. The moral climate surrounding Antioch was less than

desirable. It was a decadent city.

**II. The Establishment Of  
The Church At Antioch**

The establishment of the great church at Antioch is succinctly described in Acts 11. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem scattered the disciples abroad and led to the eventual establishment of the church at Antioch. Jesus was first preached to the Jews in this area and then to the Gentiles, thus making the church at Antioch the first local church to be composed of both Jews and Gentiles generally (Acts 15:23). This conglomeration of Jew and Gentile was not without difficulty. It was at Antioch that Paul withstood Peter to the face. Peter had eaten with

the Gentiles, preached to them, converted them and defended their conversion twice (Acts 10:34-38; 1:1-18; 15:7-10). But when James and his companions arrived, Peter withdrew from the Gentiles to pacify the visiting Jews and even influenced Barnabas to do so as well (Galatians 2:11-14).

However, Barnabas turned out to be one of the greatest blessings to the church at Antioch. Upon hearing about the good news of salvation at Antioch, the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to assist them in their new work (Acts 11:22). Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch and

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## My Place

There is a corner somewhere  
That I alone can fill.  
If I fail to take my place,  
No other ever will.  
It's all a part of God's great plan,  
That each a worker be,  
And somewhere in His vineyard wide,  
The Lord needs even me!

## Paul's Class On Unity Among Christians

Glenn Colley

Elders sometimes wrestle with disunion among their flock, and wonder how to approach the problem and turn it around. After all, Christians were made to love one another, and to work together. Few topics are so widely taught with the fervor as the subject of unity among Christians (I Corinthians 1:10-17, John 17:20-21, Ephesians 4:1-6, etc.).

Paul packed Philippians 2:1-16 full of answers. The factors which will develop a happy, unified church can be listed this way:

### CHURCH UNITY IS ACCOMPLISHED

1. When Christians remember the benefits of being Christians.

(2:1) -- *"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies . . . be likeminded."*

Paul shows that since these things exist, Christians should be motivated to be in unity with their fellow Christians.

Consolation means "encouragement," and describes the warm and constant encouragement we receive from Jesus through His word.

"Comfort of Love" refers to fellow Christians who through their love, help us, strengthen us, and comfort us. Pondering this relationship, Paul maintains, will help Christians get along and be likeminded.

The "fellowship of the Spirit" represents the unifying effect the Holy Spirit has on the church. Because it is the Holy Spirit who moved the inspired writers to pen our Bible, (II

Peter 1:21), we can greatly attribute our unity to Him. Many today, in their attempt to unify people, offer to loosen the truths of the Bible and admit more human opinion instead. The result is the opposite of the one intended. True unity in Jesus IS the "Fellowship of the Spirit," and comes when people humbly seek to follow the truths revealed by that Spirit.

"Bowels and mercies" simply points to the emotional bonds we have with Christ, His church, and to our hope of eternity. Another translation renders this, "Tenderness and compassion."

2. When Christians adopt the mind of Christ.

(2:5, 7) -- *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . . But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."*

So many things are attractive about the mind of Christ; His compassion, His obedient spirit, His relationship with the Father. To name a few in this area, Paul thinks specifically of Christ's humility. Pay attention to the phrases which show the decisions Jesus made before entering this world . . . decisions about the family into which He would be born, His economic level, His trade, etc. "He made Himself . . . took upon Him . . . was made . . . being found in fashion as a man . . ." These all point to the simple life of humility our Savior led. May our Christian hearts rest on the pillars of humility. In such an atmosphere, unity thrives.

3. When Christians elevate Christ as they should.

(2:9-11) -- *"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

There will be no atheists in hell. Christians forget sometimes that the confession we make of Jesus as the Son of God is not only to be made before we are baptized. The confession must be made over and over throughout our lives. Matthew 10:32 says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

4. When Christians get serious about salvation.

(2:12-13) -- *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."*

Those who claim or imply that no human activity is involved in salvation are deceptive. Not only are we to "work out" our salvation, but we are to recognize its grave and serious nature. A church of people, all seriously committed to going to heaven, will be united.

5. When Christians operate without murmuring and disputing.

(2:14) -- *"Do all things without murmurings and*

disputings." 6. When Christians are committed to keeping a good reputation in the community.

(2:15) -- *"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."*

One of the greatest killers of unity and evangelism is worldliness among church members. Keeping good reputations should be a powerful unifying cause among Christians. Let us not be known as backbiters, or adulterers, or dishonest people, or drunken people, or discontent people. Let us exhort one another to be true Christians, distinctive like salt (Matthew 5:13).

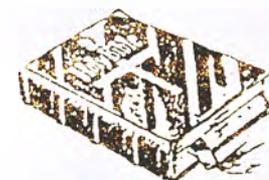
7. When Christians stand solidly for God's word.

(2:16) -- *"Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."*

We do not increase true godly unity by watering down the Bible classes and sermons. That may produce unity in diversity, but no unity in Christ. Paul's admonition in Philippians 2:2 is that Christians would be "likeminded," and "of one mind." The only way to accomplish that is for Christians to be wholly devoted to studying and obeying the Bible. Elders concerned about true unity among Christians will visit the classes and guarantee the faithfulness of the message and pulpit.

Let us pray for unity as we implement the inspired means by which it is accomplished.

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# The Greatest Question

Keith Kasarjian

Much can be taught by asking questions. The great philosopher, Socrates, developed a method of teaching that was based upon the asking of questions. Jesus, the master teacher, also taught in this fashion. We read question after question being asked of those whom Jesus was teaching. The greatest question, however, that Jesus ever asked is recorded in Matthew 16:26. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Many fundamental precepts are set forth by Jesus in this great question.

From this question we learn that **man has a soul**. This may seem elementary, but some deny this very fact. Our Jehovah's Witness friends claim that no person possesses a soul. The Biblical doctrine, however, is that mankind is composed of two elements -- body and soul. We read in I Thessalonians 5:23, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved." We read also, "receive . . . the word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). The word "soul" is found 458 times in 432 verses in the Bible, including twice in our text. It is quite obvious that man has a soul.

Also from this question we see that **our soul is valuable**. The implication of this rhetorical question is that **one soul is worth more than all the world**. Consider the value of all the diamonds in Africa, of every pearl in the Orient, and every gallon of oil in the Middle East. Add to that every dollar in the bank accounts of the world's wealthiest men and one soul remains superior in worth. Our soul is valuable because of the price paid for it (John 3:16).

Finally from this question we see that **our soul can be exchanged**. Jesus tells us in essence that it is possible to trade our soul for something else. Before trading, though,

one must realize that no matter what they get in return, they will be short-changed. In spite of this, many will trade their souls away (Matthew 7:13, 14). Some will trade their souls for apathy. They have even become apathetic about their apathy. They do not care about their souls, the souls of others, or living godly. Still others will trade their souls for unscriptural marriages. They know what

our Lord said in Matthew 19:9, yet they remain in a sinful marriage. Our soul is worth more than such a relationship. Others we know are "swapping" their soul for worldly pleasures. They are lured away from God by the love of money or are caught up in the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). They have given themselves over to immorality, immodesty, and the "if it feels good, do it"

motto of the world. We know it breaks the heart of the Father to see people trading their souls for such worthless matters.

At least three eternal truths are quite evident in this question asked by our Lord. We must know and teach others that man has a soul, it is valuable, and that it can be exchanged, but only at great expense.

May we never squander or jeopardize our souls with the matters of this world but rather "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age" (Titus 2:12) so we will live with Him forever.

--100 W. Brooks St., Brewton, AL 36426.

## A New Man Desires A New World

Cecil Corkren

Christians today, like Abraham, "Look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). This world is not the Christian's home. He is just passing through. His desire is "a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Hebrews 11:16).

Paul declares, "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). A Christian is **NEW**. The old world is corrupt, and filled with sin (I John 2:15-17). Our world today is filled with tormented minds. These tormented minds are the result of our tormented world. When we feed our minds daily on lust and greed, which we see on TV, we too will be tormented. Most of what can be viewed would upset the mind of the best of Christians. Lot, was subjected to such an environment which, "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with its unlawful deeds" (II Peter 2:6-8). Lot was said to be righteous, but his soul was affected by the sins of Sodom. He must have desired a better place.

Noah, like Lot, had a similar problem with this old world. In the days of Noah, "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Noah was unhappy with his world and "by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with

fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

New goes with new. A true Christian falls out of love with this old world, and sets "his affections on things above, not on things on this earth" (Colossians 3:2). Jesus taught that new goes with new (Matthew 9:16-17). However, as long as we live here on this earth we cannot escape our surroundings. Paul said, "For then must ye go out of the world" (I Corinthians 5:10). When man lives either apart from God or defiant to God, he has made this old world his home. Social and political attempts are made to deal with the world's unrest, but are bound to be largely ineffective. President Clinton has been on a mission to Europe and Russia, seeking better relationships with these nations. Man lives and works in vain for a better world. I am reminded of what the apostle Peter says, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (II Peter 2:19). The dictators and corrupt politicians that have been cast upon the shores of the twentieth century, are the cause of much of our disorder. Man has followed these leaders and has created for himself a world filled with violence.

It is the individual man who needs to be remade first; then society will be remade by

restoring man back into fellowship with his Maker. Christ is the panacea for all earth's woes. We can never make heaven out of this old world. Christ is coming again to take us to a better environment (John 14:1-6; II Peter 3:13). There, **God will make all things new** (Revelation 21:1-27).

This is where "new man" desires to go when life is over. A place where joy and pleasure will never end (Psalm 16:11). "O think of the home over there, by the side of the river of light. I'll soon be at home over there. The story has been told of the old missionary returning from a long stay on the mission field, was getting off the ship when

'President Teddy Roosevelt was returning from an African Safari. It seemed as if all of New York City turned out to welcome the President home, and the old missionary had no one to meet him. He felt bad, and thought how nice it was to be greeted like Teddy was greeted. That night in his room after praying, he remembered why he was not greeted warmly at the dock that day. He suddenly realized he had not arrived at home yet. Yes, **THE NEW MAN DESIRES A NEW WORLD**

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

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

The organist, who is playing the traditional wedding march, lets the music fade just as the bride reaches the front of the auditorium and is quietly "given away" by her nervous father. Everything is perfect -- the flowers, the candles, the wedding gown, and the tunes are all just right. The minister begins, "We are gathered to join this man and this woman in Holy matrimony." Then, because it is traditional, he continues, "If there is anyone here who knows any reason why these two should not be joined, let him speak now, or forever hold his peace."

Now, face it. No one will likely speak up. What bothers me though is that there may have been a silent voice that already expressed disapproval of this marriage. Listen to Jesus speak: "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). Next time you happen to be attending a wedding, and it happens to be yours, be sure to consult the Lord to see how blessed this blessed union really is.

# The Rapture

## Johnny Ramsey

As one travels the streets and highways of America he often sees automobiles with bumper stickers bearing these signs:

"In case of Rapture this car will no longer have a driver."

Many religious leaders identify with such a message but millions remain puzzled

by such wording. Actually, the word does not exist in the Bible and the teaching that goes with The Rapture is anti-Biblical. Dr. Robert Strong once gave this definition of the doctrine:

"By The Rapture is meant the sudden and possible secret

coming of Christ in the air to catch away from the earth the resurrected bodies of those who have died in the faith and with them the living saints." However, according to Revelation 1:7 we learn that every eye will see the Lord when He comes -- even the

wicked ones who pierced His side! There is nothing secret about the matter! Also, as I Thessalonians 4:16 affirms, there will be plenty of noise to acclaim the Lord's return!

Dispensationalists proclaim that the Rapture period is of seven years duration. During this time the saints are at peace while the sinners are in great tribulation on earth. But, **But, the Lord taught in two parables of Matthew 13 that there is no separation of good and evil until the end of the world. Read carefully the scintillating stories of the tares and the fishnet. Our Savior emphasized that the righteous and the ungodly would dwell side by side until separated for all eternity into either heaven or hell. In John 6 Christ mentioned three times that such would take place in the last day. Earlier, in John 5:28-29 Jesus promised that all that were in the graves would hear His voice and come forth at the same time to receive judgment. There will be but one resurrection composed of both the good and the evil (Acts 24:15).**

In I Thessalonians 4 Paul discusses specifically what will happen to the saints -- both dead and living ones -- when the Redeemer comes. But, on the very next page of the Bible, in II Thessalonians 1:4-10, the same Apostle, on the very same subject of Christ's coming, to the identical audience, the Thessalonian church, informs us that, when (adverb of time) the Lord comes He will be admired by the saints while the wicked are being overwhelmed by the wrath of God! There is no place nor time for the so-called Rapture (Hebrews 9:27-28).

In Ephesians 4:5 we learn that there is one hope in Christianity, not two or three but just one! Some hope for "God's glorified earth" while others eagerly anticipate the Rapture. But New Testament Christians hope for heaven -- the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 6:19-20).

In I Timothy 6:13-14 and II

Timothy 4:8 we find clear teaching that joins the resurrection of the dead, the reward of the saints and the glorious appearing of Christ (Titus 2:13) at the same precise moment (I Corinthians 15:52).

In the very passage immediately following the chief proof-text of Rapture teachers, (I Thessalonians 5:1-4) we read vivid words that forever teach the righteous are not taken away before the Judgment Day but are present present with the wicked until the time the wicked receive punishment at which time the righteous receive their reward. (Read Page 167 of The Millenium by Loraine Boettner).

The gospel is to be preached by the children of God till the end of the world (Matthew 28:20), but this would be impossible if the saints are raptured 7 years prior to the world's end! There are just too many problems with such a teaching for Bible believers to accept such anti-Scriptural matters. As Boettner powerfully stated:

"Jesus said that He would raise up those who believe on Him at the last day (John 6:39, 49, 44, 54). Clearly there can be no other days after the last day."

One of these days, known only to Jehovah -- (Matthew 24:36), the end of the world will come. Only those who live and die in Christ (John 8:21; Revelation 14:13) will be prepared and thus, able to stand (Revelation 6:17). What a tragedy to be unprepared and unable to sing redemption's sweet song!

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## The Church At Antioch

Continued From Page 1

they taught much people for a whole year (Acts 11:25, 26). We don't even know the names of those who established the church in Antioch, but we do know their method. They took the seed of the kingdom and sowed it into the hearts of men (Luke 8:11; Acts 11:19, 20; Romans 1:16). That seed fell upon many with good and honest hearts and brought forth fruit.

### III. The Excellence Of The Church At Antioch

The church at Antioch exhibited excellence in so many areas. Note three areas in particular.

1. **Evangelistic Zeal** -- First, we notice the evangelistic zeal of the church at Antioch at home. The local church there grew because the brethren at Antioch truly believed in the power of the gospel, and they energetically spread the glad tidings. That local church was well supplied with teachers, making it possible for the church to further her growth (Acts 13:1; 15:35). Antioch was a teaching church and they grew as a result (Acts 11:21, 24). This is precisely the order that must exist for church growth to result. Before souls can be saved the gospel must be taught (Romans 10:13-17; John 6:44, 45). The seed must be sown (Luke 8).

Not only was Antioch given to evangelistic zeal at home, but the evangelistic zeal of Antioch abroad was one of her greatest strengths. Antioch was a missionary church. She was not only evangelistic at home but a missionary abroad. Antioch became the base of Paul and Barnabas' and others efforts to spread the gospel

(Acts 13:1-3). In fact, all three of Paul's missionary journeys started from Antioch. If not for Antioch we might not have some of the inspired correspondence between Paul and the churches he established on his missionary journeys. It can truly be said that Antioch had an outreach to the unreached. Where could a better example of a church fulfilling her obligations both at home and abroad be found than in Antioch? Antioch took the great commission of Christ seriously (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). We are under those same marching orders with the same gospel, but with even greater resources and numbers. We must do no less than the church at Antioch.

2. **Economic Assistance** -- The church at Antioch was a benevolent church. Prophets came from Jerusalem unto Antioch. A prophet by the name of Agabus predicted that a famine would come in the days of Claudius Caesar. The brethren at Antioch, upon hearing this, determined to compassionately send relief to the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:27-30). These brethren, having been made partakers of the spiritual blessings of the Jewish Christians, showed their gratitude by ministering unto them in their fleshly needs. The benevolence of the church at Antioch is reminiscent of the same attitude of the brethren in Jerusalem one toward another (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:31-37). The church at Antioch put their faith in action (James 2:14-26). They didn't merely say, "be warmed and filled" to their Judean brethren. They

met their needs with their deeds.

3. **Emphasis on Apostolic Authority** -- The very first serious doctrinal controversy to beset the church was the controversy concerning the essentiality of Gentiles being circumcised in order to be saved. The conflict was not over whether Gentiles could receive the gospel. That had already been settled at the household of Cornelius and Peter's subsequent defense of those events (Acts 10:11). Certain men from Judea came to Antioch to insist that physical circumcision was necessary for the salvation of the Gentiles (Acts 15:1). The church at Antioch insisted that Paul, Barnabas, and a delegation of others from Antioch, travel to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders on this question (Acts 15:2, 3). The Apostles sent an epistle back to the brethren at Antioch to convey the inspired decision made in Jerusalem. The church at Antioch respected and accepted this decision. They respected apostolic authority and so must we (Acts 2:42).

### Conclusion

The church at Antioch shines as one of the brightest churches of Christ to have ever existed. Let us today determine to do everything within our power to duplicate her excellence.

**Be A  
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January 28, 1994

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- Saved By Grace
- A Divine Romance
- "As Good As Jesus And As Strong As Popeye"
- Weapons For My Children Galatians 5:16-26
- Determination Will Be A Daily Decision
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Tribute

Volume 30 Number 5  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- A

ie

## A Dozen Things That Will Help America In 1994 (No. 2)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In the first of this two-part series I listed six of these aids. They were: (1) Respect For God And His Word; (2) Respect For Duly Constituted Authority; (3) Live Peacefully; (4) Strive For Harmony In The Home; (5) Beauty Of Character and (6) Righteousness In Heart, Head And Hand. The other six will now be added.

### (7) Forget A Grudge

#### And Make Right A Wrong

Harboring grudges is a sure road to poor mental health; it harms the holder of such much more than the object of his grudge or envy. Make right a wrong. Life is too short and friends are too hard to find and hold to allow wrongs to go on without seeking acceptable solutions. Colossians 3:13 and Ephesians 4:32 are great passages along this line. So is the parable in the latter part of Matthew 18.

### (8) Be Honest

#### In Every Situation

No American would commit a theft or robbery in 1994 if this intense imperative were followed with diligence. Paul wrote, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men . . . Let us walk honestly, as in the day; . . ." (Romans 12:17; 13:13). Honesty should be threefold -- toward self, others and God.

### (9) Possess A Willingness To Work And Do It Diligently

God gave Adam and Eve work to do in the excellencies of Eden (Genesis 2:15ff). The

Father and Son both work as per John 5:17. Jesus worked with urgency (John 9:4). He filled his life with work. We are commanded to work (Ephesians 4:28; II Thessalonians 3:10). Work would be a sure panacea for many of the problems that ail our nation.

### (10) Prayer

Prayer is for those who are God's children. This is one of the sure blessings that should prompt a person to become a Christian by hearing Christ, forming a faith in His Deity, repenting of sins, confessing faith in Christ as God's Son and putting Him on in the waters of baptism. As God's children we need to pray as though everything depended on God and work as though everything depended on us. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams possible. Prayer moves the hand of Him that moves the Universe. We need to pray for our homes, our cities, our towns, our counties, our states where we live, our country and the world as a whole. We need to pray for the Lord's church to remain solid, sound and evangelistic in outreach. Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:17, 18 and I Timothy 2:1, 2 are great passages inculcating prayer for God's children.

### (11) Be Kind, Sympathetic And Considerate

There is a famine in our land of all these holy traits of character. The Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31

and Paul's counsel in Ephesians 4:32 inculcate these golden virtues.

### (12) Be Totally Free Of Mind-Altering, Bodily Crippling And Soul-Destroying Drugs

Those in position to know suggest that close to 90 percent of our crimes in America are drug-related. People get hooked on expensive drugs and the only ways many can finance their habits are by becoming drug pushers, robbing or selling their bodies for immoral purposes.

Usually, when we mention drugs people think of marijuana, heroin, cocaine, LSD, etc. But alcohol is mind-altering, bodily crippling and soul-destroying. Alcoholism is our number one drug abuse problem and has been for a long, long time. It is hypocritical to the nth degree, and then some, to urge our children "just to say NO to drugs" when Dad and Mother are NOT SAYING NO to the devilish brew of alcohol. It is reliably estimated by those in position to know that 90 percent of young people get their first alcoholic drink AT HOME!! How many who read this are interested enough in keeping your children off drugs that you will make your home and life free of all harmful drugs inclusive of alcohol?

If you are hooked on nicotine, and MANY members of the church are, you are not saying no to a

drug that is a sure killer. When you puff you are endangering the health of all around you who receive your nicotine poison second hand. Smoking is selfish to the nth degree. Before God it cannot be pleasing to Him and His Son.

Let's work for a drug free South and USA during 1994 and the rest of this century.

### CONCLUSION

These twelve imperatives will surely help the Mid-South, the Deep-South and all of America to be a better and far safer place in which to live during 1994. How many of US will really take these points of counsel to heart and apply them with diligence to our lives?

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

## What About "Special Music" In The Worship? #2

David W. Hester

A point which is pressed by the advocates of "special music" in worship is quite curious. They assume their conclusion is axiomatic: the first century church employed choirs, solos, and the like in worship; therefore, we in the modern church may do so today.

Those who try to prove their point turn to I Corinthians 14:26 and declare triumphantly, "The church at Corinth had those who 'brought a psalm;' therefore, they had special music at Corinth, and we may do so!"

Can you detect some irony here? These brethren, who denigrate "proof-texting" in preaching, utilize the same method when it comes to this issue! In addition, they misuse the verse in question.

In verse 26, Paul also mentions that some brought

". . . a doctrine, tongue, revelation, interpretation." Clearly, these items are of the miraculous, related to Paul's prior discussion in chapters 12-13 of spiritual gifts and the discussion in chapter 14 prior to the passage in question. It seems that the "psalm" of verse 26 is also miraculous.

Furthermore, it also is apparent that the apostle was not condoning the practice in verse 26; rather, he was condemning it! Every time Paul used the phrase "every one" in I Corinthians, he was condemning what the brethren at Corinth were doing.

In 1:12, Paul writes, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith . . ." In the verse, he condemns division among them. In 11:21, he says, "For in eating every one taketh

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Saved By Grace

Glenn Colley

There's a great deal of false teaching circulating today in regard to the subject of our salvation by grace. Are we saved by grace? Absolutely. Ephesians 2:8-9 will always read the same: "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."

This saving grace, however, is not unconditional. The Bible, divinely inspired, answers the erroneous doctrines about grace.

For example, someone might say or imply, "Because we are under the abundant grace of the Savior, we can take a less rigid attitude toward sin and the necessity of repentance." This line of reasoning is being used widely in regard to divorce and remarriage, the false teaching of denomi-

nationalism, and a variety of other issues. But this is a misapplication of God's grace. Romans 6:1 clarifies, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

Another erroneous teaching about God's grace involves the idea that Christians who *TRULY* appreciate God's grace are not so concerned about being righteous. People who hold this view will argue that grace-loving Christians do good works, but their knowledge of being saved by grace relaxes the stressful drive to faithfulness. "Rather spend time having a barbecue with your neighbors on Sunday night than to come to worship? Go ahead -- Anyone who would criticize you for that is obviously a legalist!" Is it incorrect to teach that God's grace DEMANDS striving to do right all the

time?

Consider Titus 2:11-13:

"Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (emp. mine, GC)

A sermon on grace today, which doesn't include the fact that God's grace teaches us to live right, is only half-baked.

The grace of God is abundant and marvelous. Praise Him for His loving grace! But guard against false teachers who would seek to make grace a license to sin.

## A Divine Romance

Johnny Ramsey

Surely no verse in the Old Testament has the quaint beauty of Psalms 85:10

"Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

This divine romance makes sweethearts out of vibrant combinations. Such arrangements should last a lifetime and should never be divorced from each other! What a combination mercy and truth make. Just contemplate what righteousness and peace can accomplish together!

Micah 6:8 tells us that godly people love mercy. In Matthew 5 our Lord spoke of

happiness for the merciful and then Christ related in Matthew 18 how sad the lack of mercy made the unforgiving servant. In Titus 3 we are taught that one of the grandest contributions to our redemption is the merciful nature of God in not giving us what we deserve but rather extending to us His grace whereby we might be saved! But truth must be blended with mercy or justice would be a farce. In Hosea 11:8 Jehovah, with broken heart, admits that giving up Israel to captivity deeply saddened the halls of heaven. In spite of His

mercy and goodness truth demands they pay for their sins. As Nahum 1:3 tells us so we must believe:

"God will in no wise clear the guilty." Again and again the Almighty will appeal to us to accept His will but if we stubbornly refuse Judges 2:11-19 clearly lets us know that the justice of God will be served. Today, even in the church, we have folk who forget truth goes with mercy. Cheap grace is one of the Devil's greatest arguments but it will not change the truth on salvation! Some folk seem to

Continued On Page 4

## "As Good As Jesus And As Strong As Popeye"

Don Williams

Such was the wish, once stated by a little boy who was an avid cartoon watcher, and a regular Sunday School attendee. This raises an interesting thought: If I had a boy (or boys, as I do), who would I want their lives to be patterned after, in terms of Biblical characters?

As A Boy...

... I would want them to have the wisdom of Solomon (I Kings 2:9). He could have asked for whatever he desired, but he chose to ask for an understanding heart to discern between good and bad. We can ask God for this as well (James 1:5).

... I would want them to be encouragers, like Barnabas (Acts 4:36). He had the ability to see the good in others (Saul, John Mark), and stand up for others when they needed a friend. Too many see what is wrong with the world. I hope they will look for the good in others.

... I would want them to have the prayer life of Daniel (Daniel 6:10). He prayed regularly, even in times of persecution. His devotion to God gave him immediate access to the throne-room of God (Daniel 9:23). Someone has said, "he stands best who kneels most."

... I would want them to have the courage of Joseph (Genesis 39:9). Against all odds, in a pagan country, deserted by his family, he remained faithful and true to God, and to his moral principles. He withstood

temptations, even having enough wisdom to flee temptation when it came his way (Genesis 39:12).

... I would want them to have the evangelistic fervor of Andrew (John 1:41, 42). It was not enough that he had found Jesus -- now he needed to share the news with someone else. Who better than his own brother, Peter? Such fervor was contagious (Philip and Nathaniel).

... Above All, I would want them to imitate Christ in their lives (I Corinthians 11:1). He is the perfect example of how a man ought to conduct himself (Hebrews 4:15). He was kind to the helpless (Mark 1:41: a leper), sympathetic to the grieving (John 11:35: "Jesus wept"), concerned about the lost (John 4: The woman at the well), helpful to the hungry (John 6: 5,000 fed), and so many other things to others (John 21:25).

I read an interesting statement recently. It read "Train up a child in the way you know you should have gone yourself." I am grateful for my good raising. I just hope, as you do also, that our teaching of God's way will take.

--P.O. Box 592, Guin, AL 35563.

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# Weapons For My Children Galatians 5:16-26

**Cindy Colley**

Well, I've heard of career changes, but few so radical as that of Candy Lightner, the original founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. She, having abandoned her post at the helm of that organization, has gone to Capitol Hill as a lobbyist, of all things, for the liquor industry.

"What a traitor!" you might think. I suggest, though, that her switch from foe to friend of the liquor industry tells something about her motive for founding MADD in the first place. While we might have presumed that the founder of MADD would have an objection to the use of alcoholic beverages, it's clear now that her motive was the protection of life on the highways; a noble motive to be sure, but one that issues from humane concerns rather than any adherence to God's standard of morality regarding the sin of drunkenness. It would seem that material concerns, now, have diverted her from ANY purpose she might have had in founding MADD.

We read daily about the lies that are being told to our children in schools across our nation and now in public service announcements on major television networks; lies about safe sex. While aids, a disease almost always caused by transgression of God's laws regarding sex, runs rampant among the youth of our nation, children are being told (indirectly and sometimes directly), by those who are hailed as knowledgeable and responsible, that fornication is normal and expected behavior. They are further being told that its worst consequence is physical death and that, of all things, there is a way to responsibly commit the sin of fornication, so that even this consequence may be avoided. Those who are distributing this information are not even a little concerned with a spiritual purity in youth. They, like Mrs. Lightner, are motivated, at best, by health concerns.

As a mother of two children

who are growing up in this barrage of deceit, I have just about had it with health concerns! I'm like all mothers in that I want to provide a healthy atmosphere for my children. But problems that are caused by the prince of this world . . . problems that are direct results of sin are not going to go away because we become health conscious about them. We will always reap the sorrow that accompanies the sin of drunkenness, until we attack drunkenness as a sin. We will suffer from the maladies that result when fornication, adultery and homosexuality are prevalent in our society, until we return to the standard of purity given in God's Word. We can continue to try to remedy the symptoms of a sinsick society, but we can never be successful until we get to the root of the problem . . . sin.

Galatians 5:19-21 lists the sins of drunkenness, adultery, fornication and several other sins in what Paul calls the works of the flesh. He says that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God; a fate much worse than contracting aids or loss of physical life. It is interesting to notice that in verse 17, he tells us what it is that does battle with these sins of the flesh. It is the Spirit that "lusteth against the flesh." It further says that the flesh lusts against the Spirit and that these things are contrary one to another.

The remedy for the disease, sorrow, and death that results from sin in our society is not to find safer, healthier ways to commit it. The remedy for the sorrow of sin is found in verse 16: "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Medical authorities, and educational experts from the classroom teacher to Joycelyn Elders herself can continue to fight the lusts of the flesh with weapons that are themselves crafted of fleshly materials. But until our young people are armed with a knowledge of

the Spirit found in God's Word, their weapons will not be powerful enough and their motives will not be pure enough to conquer the sorrow of sin. That, by the way, is the way the devil wants it to be.

May we teach our children that there is a bigger reason to be morally pure than the desire to preserve this flesh that is decaying already. May we arm them with the Spirit and through daily teaching

and godly example give them to Christ.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

vs. 26

--203 Wildwood Dr., Jasper, AL 35501.

## Determination Will Be A Daily Decision

**Neal Pollard**

Go ahead and make those lists for the upcoming year. Though you have broken them in all previous years, this year is going to be different. This year will be the best year of your life, a year in which you become a better parent and child, a more efficient employee or employer, an ideal citizen, and a better spouse. Most importantly, you will draw closer to God than you ever have. You will make the decision to become a child of God. You will bring a soul to Jesus this year. You will have a hand in helping to restore an erring Christian. All of these qualities will shine forth from your life in this next year. Just determinedly decide to live a fuller life.

**Determine Not To Know Anything But Christ And Him Crucified**

(I Corinthians 2:2). Paul expected that of himself. Such a determination includes an endeavor to learn the "all truth" into which God's Spirit guided the New Testament writers for revelation (cf. John 16:13; John 14:26). In your life, revitalize your love of the old, rugged cross. Long for the first-century gospel, a body of fully-inspired truth which can set the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on their ears. Reacquaint yourself with the supreme sacrifice of our loving Father, and repeatedly dwell on the gracious gift of the Savior and King.

**Refuse The Evil And Choose The Good**

(cf. Isaiah 7:15, 16). In doing so, you will be following the master example of our Lord. Against the devil, Jesus made

sound decisions even amidst severe temptations. When the crowd of your peers pressures you to conform, refuse the evil and choose the good! When tempted to sit home on Sunday night, refuse the evil and choose the good! When tempted to shatter your precious marriage vows, refuse the evil and choose the good! Then, folks will think of Jesus when they see you.

**In Brotherly Love, Be Devoted To One Another** (Romans 12:10). Treat your brothers and sisters in Christ better in this new year. When you hear of their shortcomings, channel your urges to whisper it to anyone else into gently confronting the erring one instead. Be devoted to one another, ever confident that your brethren

will grow spiritually as a result of your encouragement. Compliment the good works of your brethren. Encourage young Christians, new converts, old soldiers of the cross, our missionaries, and widow/widower Christians. Work to develop as strong a relationship with your brethren as you do with your friends in the world.

If we adopt these Biblically-based resolutions, think of how strong we all will be 365 days from now! Pray daily that you grow as a child of God. Pick yourself up quickly when you fall. Trust in the transforming power of the gospel, as you decide to study it daily. Do not dissolve. Resolve!

**"What a leader needs is a following. I don't mean a blind following, but those who respect and trust his judgment and then encourage him."**

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**Former president Ronald Reagan learned the need for decision-making early in his life. An aunt had taken him to a cobbler to have a pair of shoes custom-made for him. The shoemaker asked, "Do you want a round toe or a square toe?" Young Ronald hemmed and hawed, so the cobbler said, "Come back in a day or two and tell me what you want." The time passed, and Ronald still hadn't decided. So, the cobbler said, "Your shoes will be ready tomorrow." When Ronald got his shoes, one had a round toe and the other had a square toe! Reagan observed from the experience, "Looking at those shoes every day taught me a lesson. If you don't make your own decisions, somebody makes them for you."**

**Philippians 2:12 says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." In other words, make your own decisions based on solid ground -- the truth of God's word.**

# What About "Special Music" In The Worship? #2

Continued From Page 1

before other his own supper . . ." Here he condemns their practice concerning the Lord's Supper. Why is it that, according to some, verse 26 is different from Paul's earlier practice?

I Corinthians 14:40 is the key to understanding verse 26. Paul writes, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Any recent F-HU graduate immediately recognizes the passage, since it was quoted so often in chapel! The apostle was condemning the disorderly services at Corinth. Rather than proving the case for "special music," this verse condemns it!

Some ask, "If a chorus can sing after the closing prayer, then why not before the closing prayer?" This does not prove the validity of choruses in the worship. Whether or not a chorus can sing outside of worship is a separate issue. By this same reasoning, one may have weddings, funerals, and common meals in the worship! All these practices are to be done separate from worship!

One point must be pressed. Weddings and funerals are not times of worship! The purpose is important! A wedding unites a man and woman together in marriage; that's the purpose of it! A funeral services is designed to comfort the bereaved and to remember the deceased; that's the purpose of it! Again, funerals and weddings are not times of worshipping God!

Yet another argument made in support of "special music" in worship hinges on the difference between speaking and singing. It is claimed that if a psalm or hymn can be read by a preacher or a teacher while the rest listen in silence, then a psalm or hymn may be sung by one person while the rest listen in silence.

However, this fails to recognize that one must have separate authority for both practices. God has specified he wants preachers and teachers in the church. The nature of teaching is such that

all of the preachers and teachers can't function at the same time, else chaos would ensue. Also, reading and teaching are different in nature from singing. The New Testament authorizes congregational singing, not solo or small-group singing in worship.

Again, some will try this argument: if a lapse of a few seconds may occur among the singers, (as in the case of Paradise Valley), then why not have a longer lapse - a choir singing, while the rest listen in silence?

This argument fails to grasp the nature of reciprocity. As pointed out in the last article, the Greek reciprocal pronouns used in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 demand the congregation participate together! Also, using this line of reasoning, a choir could do all of the singing one Sunday and then the rest could sing at the next service. In addition, a song may be written so that every word is not sung by everyone at the same time, but the entire assembly still sings the song together!

Still another argument is quite curious. It is claimed that, "according to your reasoning," if one person or a few people fail to sing in an assembly, the rest automatically becomes a choir and we need to stop the practice.

This is a misrepresentation of the position taken in this series of articles. As pointed out last week, there must be a purpose involved in worship. If one fails to discharge his duty to sing, the rest do not automatically become a choir, because they have not purposed to become one! The rest of the congregation is simply fulfilling its duty in worship! This also applies to the Lord's Supper. If a Christian does not partake, does that mean the rest of the congregation is automatically taking that person's Supper for him? To ask is to answer. That person needs to be taught! The commands to sing are to all!

But, what of "vocal bands" and imitating the instrument with the voice? Remember, we are not speaking of it outside worship, but in worship. Performance groups, by nature, function as entertainment media. As Dave Miller has so well documented in his booklet *Singing and New Testament Worship*, the atmosphere surrounding these performers and their concerts suggests entertainment rather than worship.

This writer has attended such a concert in the past; the leader of the group (a well-known performer in his own right) declared at the outset,

think that the Creator is so merciful that even the ungodly and disobedient will be saved but our Father is also so truthful that only those who obey Him will be redeemed (Hebrews 5:9; Luke 6:46).

But, another heavenly tandem involves righteousness and peace. In Isaiah 57:21 we see clear evidence that "there is no peace . . . to the wicked." Only the righteous have "peace passing understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

"Peace, perfect peace  
In this dark world of sin  
The blood of Jesus  
Whispers peace within."

The hymn writer was in tune with many passages of Scripture with such vibrant words. Seeking first the kingdom and emphasizing proper treasures will bring serenity in the midst of an embattled world (Matthew 6:21; Philippians 1:10; I Timothy 2:1-2). As Psalms 92:12 tells us --

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree."

If our lives lack peace, contentment and joy we must confess that without the Lord we can do nothing (John 15:5). Material prosperity cannot buy the best things in this life nor treasures in the world to come. No message shines more clearly than

"Brethren, we're here to worship." Well, if that is so, it's unauthorized worship! There simply is no New Testament authority to make noises resembling instruments or clapping in worship.

The passages in Ephesians and Colossians authorize "speaking . . . teaching . . . admonishing." This indicates verbal, understandable words. It's also important that we do not teach error in what we sing. If we can't preach what we sing, we don't need to sing it!

One last thought: "vocal bands" leave the impression that they fellowship error. Again, this author has seen

handbills advertising a well-known group singing at a denomination, taking up "love-offerings!" Now, if the purpose is to teach the truth, that is one thing; however, there is no indication they have done such. Rather, they have affiliated themselves with the radical leftists in the church.

Congregational singing is wonderful. I am privileged to be at a congregation which has some of the best singing this side of heaven. May we all endeavor to improve our singing as God would have it, and stand firm in the face of those who would attempt to change the truth of God to fit their selfish wants.

## A Divine Romance

Continued From Page 2

Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

Of course Jesus Christ embodied all four of these attributes -- mercy, truth, righteousness and peace -- in an absolutely perfect life. Some unknown writer said:

**This Man ---**

This man scorned not to use his hands.

This man -- born lowly -- changed history so much that our world wouldn't be here if it were not for him.

This man changed history -- not with wars and guns, but with kind words and gentle teaching.

This man did not live long -- only 33 years.

This man did more than any man has done or will ever do.

Of this man a great book was written -- about his birth, his deeds, his teachings and his death.

This man never had a great amount of money, but was the richest man who ever lived.

This man gave his life and his home for us.

This man gave us eternal salvation.

This man was scorned and mocked.

This man was worshipped and praised.

This man -- Jesus.

Let us follow His matchless steps to the utmost of our ability as we press on to the heavenly goal.

### Tribute

Vital to the smooth operation of any local establishment of the Lord's church is a devoted person who has no authority save that of an ordinary Christian. Yet this person holds the power to disrupt or to expedite the most important work of the church. This quiet but influential person is the elders wife. Elders' wives come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors and textures.

An elders wife usually can be found long after services are over, sitting in a parked car by herself . . . waiting. Or in an empty, unheated auditorium after the crowd has gone . . . waiting. She gets a lot of Bible reading done this way and knows where all the songs are in the hymn book. She knows the loneliness of long evenings at home alone while her husband is out trying to correct other people's troubles. She is alone because her children usually are old enough to be occupied with their own pursuits, if they have not left home altogether. So she occupies her time with busy work . . . and waits. An elder's wife must be staunch as a rock, as tender as a mother hen, as busy as a beaver and as quiet as a mouse.

via Bulletin Digest

February 4, 1994

See Inside Articles:

- The Rules
- Lies About Our Lord
- The Essential Elements Of Scriptural Baptism
- "Most Of A Minute"
- What Do Elders Do?
- MDR?

Volume 30 Number 6  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Truth

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

1e

## The Difference God Makes

Johnny Ramsey

For years my favorite passage for comfort in time of heartache has been Psalms 46. At funerals no text calms troubled families more. It is balm for preachers and audience as well. The precious contents of this marvelous stanza superseded anything the famous poets ever wrote to bring solace in times of grief. The component parts of the Psalm enrich one's daily sojourn and bring sunshine on a dreary day. It reminds me of a hymn we sometimes sing:

"Again the Lord of light and life

Awakes the kindling rays

Unseals the eyelids of the mom

And pours increasing day."

Jehovah is portrayed in this Psalm as One with tender power. We will not fear, come what may, because our Sovereign God is our refuge, strength and present help! What a tremendous solace and balm for sorrowful pilgrims in a strange land. Regardless of external pressures and earthly problems "the God of Jacob is with us." He is in our midst. Storms may surround us in skies heavy with portents of danger but our Creator "rules in the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:25). Therefore, we are cautioned to be still and know that "there is no power but of God" (Romans 13:1). When we absolutely learn to be quiet and let our Maker do the talking (Habakkuk 2:20)

the dark clouds turn to beautiful billows of peaceful scenes that cause rainbows to grace the canopy of heaven. Yes, there is a balm in Gilead to soothe our aching breast (Jeremiah 8). The difference God makes is graphically told in this beloved section of the Old Testament. While the world seems overwhelmed with turbulence the servant of the Lord has peace passing understanding (Philippians 4:7). Instead of chaotic existence followers of the heavenly cause possess tranquil hearts (I Timothy 2:2).

"It is enough: Earth's struggle soon shall cease,

And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace."

We find refuge in Christ today (Hebrews 6:18-20) regardless of national strife and personal conflicts. We receive strength in the name of the Savior to overwhelm all odds (Philippians 4:13). Though we always serve God with reverential awe (Hebrews 12:28) the Christian is delivered from the fear that captivates the world (I John 4:18).

Since "the God of Jacob" is with us we have power with the Almighty (Hosea 12:1-4). He will supply our every need (Philippians 4:19) and cause everything to ultimately bless our lives (Romans 8:28). Even the "sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared" to the glory that awaits faithful followers of

the Lamb of God (Romans 8:18). More than conquerors are we as we press on toward the gates of that city that lies four-square. Through whatever awaits us in the

## Conservatism And Liberalism

Earl Trimble

Webster defines *ism* as "A noun-forming suffix meaning . . . the act, practice, or result of, as in terrorism. . ." For *conservative* Webster gives: "tending to preserve old institutions, methods, customs, and the like; adhering to what is old or established; opposing or resisting change . . ."

*Liberal* is defined as: "One who advocates greater freedom of thought and action; one who has liberal principles . . ."

These are the root or basic meanings given these two words by Webster. It should be noted, however, that like many other words, these are relative terms. For example, one who is generally considered as being conservative could be viewed as being liberal by one holding ultra or extremely conservative views. Likewise, one who is liberal might be seen to be rather conservative by extremely radical liberals. Too, these descriptions are sometimes used rather carelessly. Many brethren detest the use of such "labels," as they refer to them.

meandering scenes of life just over on that golden shore are the redeemed of all ages. Praise God for He truly is "a very present help" -- our refuge and strength. The God

Usually it can be noted that those objecting to the use of the terms "conservative" and "liberal" will be seen advocating greater freedom from the strictness of inspired scripture. They seek a more "open-minded," progressive, and less rigid interpretation of scripture. Whereas those who are found using these descriptions for denoting people's attitudes toward God's word, oppose and resist change and innovations from prescribed teaching, practice, method, and such like.

Actually our liberal brethren are parroting the words of those people of God of Jeremiah's day who said, "We will not walk therein," referring to "the old paths where is the good way," as stated by God through his prophet (Jeremiah 6:16). Those among us who are calling for "bold change" within the Lord's church become incensed at being identified as liberals, who in essence are advocating digression and rebellion from Biblical teaching. They want freedom from doctrinal restraint, and go about trying to discredit and undermine its

of Jacob is with us and has sent His Son to provide us with a ladder reaching into Heaven (John 1:51).

importance. They see importance and real significance as pertaining only to the cross and person of Christ, calling such limited truth "the gospel." Faith in the deity of Christ is rapidly becoming the only criterion with them for salvation. Therefore denominationalism falls within their lines of fellowship.

Webster's basic definition of the word *liberal* clearly describes and identifies brethren among us today who are leading whole congregations into digression and apostasy. They glory in the idea of "the church in transition." We are ridiculed by them for not being silent and not minding our own congregational affairs, and for not extending to them "love" and Godspeed while they preach their perverted gospel.

May the church remain conservative in Webster's sense by remaining stable and unchanging toward scriptural teaching. *Conservative* and *liberal* are not Bible words for scriptural and unscriptural, but they define the ideas.

--10121 Luella El Paso, TX 79925.

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## The Rules

Glenn Colley

In a recent article, Carl Sagan lists six different "rules to live by." Because one of these is taught by our Master, the others take on a certain interest. As you read through this list you will have a sense of familiarity with each one, for we all practice at least one of these.

First is the "Nepotism rule", known by some as "kin selection." It says, "Give precedence in all things to close relatives, and do as you like to others."

Then is the "Tin Rule." This mixed rule says, "Suck up to those above you, and intimidate those below." This is the motto of bullies. It is called the Tin Rule because it is a combination of the Golden rule for superiors, and the Iron rule for inferiors.

The "Iron rule", simply stated is, "Do unto others as you like, before they do it unto you." Sometimes practitioners of this rule, in contempt for the Golden rule, will define the Iron rule as Golden: "He who has the gold makes the rules." This is the secret maxim of many, if they can get away with it, and often the unspoken precept of the powerful.

The "Brazen Rule" according to Confucius is, "Repay kindness with

kindness, but evil with justice." Others define it as "Do unto others as they do unto you," or "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." This rule has us forfeiting our decisions of action toward others. With this law we simply react toward the actions of others. They decide how we will treat them.

The "Silver Rule" is "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you." According to Sagan, this rule was popularized by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. It is an attempt to avoid evil without considering efforts to do good.

(While Dr. Sagan included the Golden Rule with the rest, he obviously did not consider it to be the greatest. He did however say it was "The most admired standard of behavior in the West.")

Now contrast all of these with the "Golden Rule", for this one is always attributed to our Master. It's His rule. It is the greatest rule known to man for human behavior because it teaches us to *act* instead of *react*. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12). This stretches mankind to his highest level of society. It is the antidote for unhappiness. Not everyone

appreciates this rule today, nor did they in the past. Confucius was asked in the sixth century B.C. his opinion of the Golden Rule, and of repaying evil with kindness. He replied, "Then with what will you repay kindness?" Jesus responded to such logic in the sermon on the mount. He knew that **ANYONE** could be kind to those who were kind first. That's assumed by all. He said, "*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?*" (Matthew 7:46-47).

Jesus reviewed one common "rule" of His day when He said, "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. 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; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*" (Matthew 7:43-45).

# Lies About Our Lord

Tommy Blewett

Great harm can be done because of lies. Our reputation, which we have spent a lifetime establishing, can be ruined in a single day because of lies. Not long ago a major soft drink company came under investigation because of liars who claimed to have found various objects in drink bottles. The lies multiplied as reports came in from across the country. Later we learned that not one claim could be confirmed and eventually all claims were found to be nothing more than lies. Lies break hearts and ruin lives. Can you imagine anyone having the nerve to lie about our Lord? Just think of the possible harm that could result. Nevertheless, lies were told about him several times during his life. Some people even tell lies about him today.

From his birth until his death lies were told about our Lord and his work on earth. He was labeled a blasphemer by his own nation. They said, ". . . For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy: and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:33). These same people claimed that he had an unclean spirit, Mark 3:30, and said that he was mentally unstable, Mark 3:21. All these charges were nothing but lies. Furthermore, consider the potential harm to his work that could result from them. What Jew of moral standing would even

listen to one who is reported to be a blasphemer, under the power of an unclean spirit, and insane?

Many of the religious leaders of his day conspired against him because of his popularity among the Jews, and they saw him as a threat to their prestigious positions. The Pharisees, in complaining that their best efforts had failed to trap him in some matter of the law, said, ". . . Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him" (John 12:19). Therefore, they increased their efforts to turn the people away from him.

The miracles he performed caused many to believe his teachings. That was their primary purpose, John 20:30, 31. Peter pointed to them as evidence that God approved of his ministry, Acts 2:22. The opponents of Jesus tried to discredit the great works that he did. They could not deny that the miracles were done so they lied about the power behind them. Concerning the healing of a man possessed with a devil, the Pharisees said, ". . . He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils" (Matthew 9:34). How many souls refused to follow the Lord because of this lie?

The lies about our Lord were many. They said he was the carpenter's son, Matthew 13:55.

They said he was John the

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# The Essential Elements Of Scriptural Baptism

**B. J. Clarke**

Perhaps no subject evokes more controversy in the religious world than the subject of baptism. Many have been immersed who have never been scripturally baptized. Thus, we ask, "What are the essential elements of scriptural baptism?" In this article we shall note at least four essential elements for a scriptural baptism.

## I. The Right Subject

Baptism is not for everyone. It is only for certain individuals. In order to be baptized scripturally one must be four things. First, he must be an alien sinner (Romans 3:10, 23). Baptism is not for those who have already become Christians. In Acts chapter 8, we read of Simon the Sorcerer who believed and was baptized, and was therefore saved (Acts 8:13; Mark 16:16). Shortly after his conversion Simon sinned grievously by attempting to buy the gift of God with money. Peter told him that his heart was not right with God and that he needed to repent of his wickedness and pray God for forgiveness. Simon was not instructed to be baptized again to remove his sin. Baptism is not for one who has already become a child of God, but rather baptism is in order that we might become children of God (John 3:3-5; Galatians 3:26, 27). Furthermore, since baptism is only for those who are sinners, infants are not subjects for scriptural baptism. Infants are not sinners (Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Deuteronomy 24:16; I John 3:4).

Second, in order to be scripturally baptized one must be a believer in Christ (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30; Romans 10:9, 10). Here again, this prerequisite rules out infants and those who are mentally incapacitated and unable to comprehend the deity of Christ and to express their faith in that deity.

Third, one must be a penitent believer in Christ in order to be a candidate for scriptural baptism (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38). The

passage in Acts 2:38 makes it abundantly clear that repentance is a prerequisite to scriptural baptism. Thus, if one is not willing to repent of sin then he is not qualified to be baptized. Therefore, those who are living in adulterous marriages, who have no intent whatsoever to leave those adulterous marriages, are not scriptural candidates for baptism. Repentance must precede scriptural baptism.

Fourth, he must be a confessing, penitent believer (Romans 10:9, 10; Philippians 2:9-11; Acts 8:35-40). Conviction in the deity of Christ must be so deep that the candidate is willing to express it publicly, both with his lips and his life. Many of the chief rulers believed on Christ but because of the Pharisees would not confess Him lest they be put out of the Synagogue (John 12:42, 43). One who has come face to face with the deity of Christ should be more than willing to make the good confession (I Timothy 6:12).

## II. The Right Element

At least six baptisms are discussed in the New Testament with several different elements involved. There is the baptism of John, the baptism of fire, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of suffering, the baptism unto Moses and baptism in water. By the time that Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians there was only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5). Thus, the question arises. Which of the aforementioned elements is the right element in scriptural baptism today? The answer is given quite clearly in the Scriptures.

Water is the only element involved in scriptural baptism today. Jesus said that a man must be born of water in order to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Upon seeing a body of water, the eunuch requested to be baptized in that water for the remission of his sins (Acts 8:36). Paul discussed a washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:26). Peter pointed his readers back to the water that saved Noah and his family, and

emphasized that water baptism today likewise now saves us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Peter 3:20, 21).

Some have suggested that Holy Spirit baptism is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Such is impossible, for several reasons. First, Holy Spirit baptism had Christ as its administrator, and therefore is not the baptism that will last until the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Second, Holy Spirit baptism in no way pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3; Acts 22:16). Holy Spirit baptism was a direct outpouring from heaven. Contrariwise, water baptism definitely pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as the candidate dies to sin, is buried, and then arises from that watery grave to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). Third, Holy Spirit baptism was never a command; it was always a promise. The baptism of the great commission is a baptism that we have been commanded to experience in order that we might enter into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). Thus, scriptural baptism must include the right element.

## III. The Right "Mode"

People often speak of different "modes" of baptism, such as sprinkling, pouring or immersion. In reality, the word "baptism" properly understood, points to only one manner, and that is immersion. The Greek word "baptizo" has often been defined as meaning to plunge, to dip or to immerse. Paul described baptism as a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). John chose the waters of Aenon near to Salim because there was much water (John 3:23). Jesus and John the baptizer as well as Philip and the Eunuch, went down into the water and came up out of water, thus signifying immersion as the manner of New Testament baptism (Matthew 3:16ff; Acts 8:38ff). Furthermore, only immersion pictures a death, burial and resurrection as described in

Romans 6. Thus, scriptural baptism is immersion in water.

## IV. The Right Purpose

The purpose of baptism is a matter of great controversy in the religious world today. Some say it has no purpose today, others say its purpose is to save, while still others say its purpose is to add one to a denomination after salvation has already been experienced. But what saith the Scriptures? The Scriptures teach that baptism has primarily a two fold purpose.

First, its purpose is to bring us into contact with the saving blood of Christ so that we might be saved, having our sins washed away (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3; II Timothy 2:10). No one can read the aforementioned passages carefully and come to any other conclusion but that baptism is essential for salvation.

Second, its purpose is to call us to a new manner of life. Paul speaks of rising from a watery grave to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4-6). The individual who has been baptized must leave the old man of sin behind and no longer allow sin to reign in his mortal body (Romans 6:6-14). Paul describes the Colossian Christians as those who had put off the old man to put on the new man (Colossians 3:5-10; Ephesians 4:22 ff).

## Conclusion

Though much confusion exists in the world today concerning scriptural baptism, God has made his will abundantly clear. Scriptural baptism requires the right subject, the right element, the right manner and the right purpose. May we be loving and yet bold in our proclamation of this truth to a lost and dying world.

--8265 Chesterfield, Southaven, MS 38671.

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## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**My six year old has a toy guitar made of plastic with plastic fishing line strings. As she strummed the other day I noticed that it was coincidentally tuned to the first three notes of "Three Blind Mice." When I brought this to her attention she happily played and sang the song over and over. I later complimented her musical ability and asked her if she had taken lessons. She smiled warmly and said, "I taught myself."**

**Aren't we like that with God's blessings sometimes? We are anytime we take credit for the strengths and abilities within us which truly came from Him. I say, "I built that with my own hands!" But where did I get those hands? From where did I get my mind or my food or my air or my water?**

**Jesus said, "God sendeth rain to fall on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). In Job 38:28 God wanted Job to remember "Him from whom all blessings flow." He asked Job, "Hath the rain a Father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"**

**Let's always give credit where it is due.**

## Lies About Our Lord

Continued From Page 2

Baptist or an Old Testament prophet, Matthew 16:14.

They said he claimed he would rebuild the Jewish temple in three days, Matthew 26:61.

They said he deceived the people, John 7:12.

They said he forbade the paying of tribute to Caesar, Luke 23:2.

They said if he were the Son of God he would come down from the cross, Matthew 27:40.

They said he was not resurrected from the grave, Matthew 28:13.

Lies; all lies! Just think of the potential harm these lies could cause.

Here we are almost 2,000 years later and people are still spreading lies about him. While most of us look forward to the second coming of Christ one brother has built quite a following among us lying to people by saying that he returned in the year AD 70. Others say that he hasn't returned, but when he does he will establish an earthly kingdom. Looking back at his birth there have always been those who claim that he was an illegitimate child. Others deny his deity by claiming

that he was a created being like any other man. Still others say that his mother is just as prominent a character as Jesus is concerning our need for a mediator. The Jews contend that he was a great teacher, but not the Christ of Old Testament prophecy. Many teach that he failed to establish his kingdom. Those that accept the concept of denominationalism are saying that he established more than one church. And, a lot of people are lying about our Lord when they say that he will not condemn them for refusing to submit to his teachings as found in the New Testament.

We will never know the extent of the damage done to the cause of Christ because of these lies. But, we can avoid believing them ourselves and not become guilty of teaching lies by continually increasing our knowledge of the gospel and by turning from lies when they are exposed. Remember, Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8:32.

--P.O. Box 109, Vinton, VA 24179.

## What Do Elders Do?

What do elders do? They check to see that the truth is preached, counsel with those having spiritual problems, encourage new converts, decide on the course the church will follow, propose a financial budget, listen to the complaints of members, teach Bible classes, praise those who do good works, spend time with children, pray, worry when someone quits attending worship, visit the sick, try to help people who don't want help, investigate sticky problems, administer the funds of the church, cry with the brokenhearted, manage difficult-to-handle people, sit through long meetings, model Christianity, greet visitors, conduct home Bible studies, catch a lot of flack, hear the appeals of missionaries, look for new areas of service, wonder why they feel lonely, go and see the elderly, don't sleep well at nights, are involved in community activities, work for a living, try to restore the unfaithful, are sometimes the last to know when there is a problem, counsel young couples, read and study their Bibles, know they will be judged severely, smile when their efforts pay off.

Love them. Pray for them. Back them in their work. Defend them when you hear them criticized. And be thankful that God gave them to us.

Nick Hamilton - Little Rock, Arkansas



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## MDR?

**Mike Benson**

"Do you believe that it is possible for a person to actually *know* the **truth** about marriage, divorce, and remarriage? There are so many different opinions about what the Bible teaches on this subject, I sometimes wonder if the truth is attainable . . ."

This is an important question. Please consider the following:

•How can an individual be expected to obey (Hebrews 5:8, 9) Christ's teaching on MDR (Matthew 5:32; 19:9), if he is incapable of knowing what constitutes obedience in this realm?

•How can a Christian be expected to uphold the truth (Jude 3) if the truth about MDR is unattainable?

•How can a person abide in the teaching of Christ (John 8:32) on MDR if it is impossible for him to know and learn the teaching of Christ on MDR?

•How can a Christian "prove" (I Thessalonians 5:21) what the Bible says about MDR if the truth on the subject cannot be learned?

•How can an individual come under the anathema of God (Galatians 1:6-9) for not preaching the truth (about MDR), if the truth about MDR cannot be determined?

•How can a Christian fulfill the requirements of Romans 16:17, 18 by "marking" and "avoiding" those who preach false doctrine if the truth about MDR cannot be distinguished from error?

•How might a person "take heed to doctrine" (Ephesians 4:16), if Christ's doctrine on MDR cannot be learned?

•How could a person be exposed as a false teacher (Matthew 7:15) if truth and error about MDR is indistinguishable?

Paul urged, "Therefore do not be unwise, but **understand what the will of the Lord is**" (Ephesians 5:17). Yes, it is possible to . . .

1. **STUDY** what the Bible says about MDR.

2. **KNOW** what the Bible says about MDR.

3. **OBEY** what the Bible says about MDR.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

February 11, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Supervows For Marriage
- The Godly In Crisis
- Threat Of Apostasy
- Pornography
- A Genderless Church?

Volume 30 Number 7

(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the  
Words of Truth and soberness." -- Luke 1:17

e

## Some Things Must Never Change

e

By JEFF A. JENKINS

Change. It may go down in the history books as THE buzzword of the nineties. Our Nation elected a president based on his platform that American needed change. We see change all around us. Values change, standards change, laws change, styles change. So we ask, "Is there anything that doesn't change?" Surely, there is, and as God's people we should see to it that some things never change.

We must not change our teaching:

About the inspiration of the Bible - all of it (II Timothy 3:16-17).

About the one church of the Lord. If you are saved you are in His church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4).

About the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper - every Sunday (Acts 20:7).

That God wants us to sing in worship - nothing else (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

That we must give cheerfully and liberally - God has never been satisfied with less than 10% (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-7).

That men ought to assume leadership in the church - not women (I Timothy 2:11-12).

That our focus must be on the lost - not on ourselves (Matthew 28:18-20).

That sinners must obey all of the Gospel to be saved -

hear (Romans 10:17), believe (John 8:32), repent (Acts 13:3), confess (Romans 10:10), and be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21).

That Christians must love one another - unselfishly (John 13:33-35).

That drinking, homosexuality, and abortion are sins - but so are apathy

(Revelation 3:15-16), unkindness (Ephesians 4:32), greed (I Timothy 6:10), gossip (I Timothy 5:13), and pride (I Corinthians 10:12).

Concerning the sacredness of marriage - one man for one woman for life (Genesis 2:24).

That God hates divorce - period (Malachi 2:16).

That the husband is the

head of the wife - and he should love her as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:23-25).

That the greatest work a woman can do is at home - as a wife and a mother (Proverbs 31).

That the older women should teach the younger women - in word and deed (Titus 2:3-4).

Concerning discipline in the home - it is the parents responsibility to train children (Ephesians 6:1-4).

That God is good - if I am saved, it will be because of God's grace, and not because of my goodness (Ephesians 2:8).

Brethren, some things must never change!

- Montgomery, Alabama

## The Curse Of Pessimism

BY W. A. HOLLEY

What is pessimism? "An inclination to emphasize adverse aspects, conditions, and possibilities or to expect the worst possible outcome" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary).

It seems that there are those who make a career of pessimism. An optimist is willing to try; a pessimist is afraid to try. An optimist sees a glass of tea half full; a pessimist sees the same glass half empty. A prisoner who had been held in solitary confinement for several years, when asked how he managed to keep his sanity, replied, "I could look down and see the mud or I could look up and see the stars."

Noah must have been an optimist because, being warned of the forthcoming flood, he, by faith, built the ark (Genesis Chapters 6-8; Hebrews 11:7; Matthew

24:37; Luke 17:26).

David was an optimist because, he against great odds, attacked Goliath the giant, and slew him (I Samuel 17:4, 23).

Paul was an optimist. Although he suffered many things at the hands of wicked men, he never became a pessimist. He said, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Thus, even though he was often whipped, stoned and imprisoned, he never gave up (II Corinthians 11:23, 28).

At the very end of His life, when death was staring him in the face, Paul was still able to look on the bright side of things (II Timothy 4:4-8). What believer has not been strengthened by his stirring and challenging words as he comes to cross Jordan's rolling river?

Oftentimes pessimism

enters the Lord's church through some of its pessimistic members. They surrender victory before the battle is fought. Some are eternal pessimists. They continually look on the dark side of everything. They think the church is going to the dogs, and they secretly hope it will, so they can say, "I told you so." A pessimist will look for the worst, while pretending to work and look for the best.

For example, when brethren had worked hard to promote a much needed building program, one brother was heard to say, "I just hope I live long enough to tell them that I knew the whole thing would fail anyway."

The elders and the preachers plan visitation programs to invite the general public to attend Bible classes and gospel meetings, but the

pessimist will not cooperate. They say "its no use. They will not come anyway. Why waste all this time? We have tried before and we have never made any inroads." And, so the program is stopped before it ever got started.

Brethren, we should understand that pessimism is deadly, contagious and a destructive disease. Pessimism can spread like the bubonic plague through the entire congregation. It robs one of all initiative; it turns opportunities into difficulties. The language of defeat is ever on the tongues of pessimists.

However, we must not mistake caution and common sense for pessimism. Paul stated this thought in these words: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men,

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Supervows For Marriage

Glenn Colley

For a moment push aside all societal voices about home and family and construct a simple mental picture of God's ideal family. What do you see?

The husband, who loves his wife as himself (Ephesians 5:28), is the breadwinner for his family (I Timothy 5:8). He is bringing up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). He lets Jesus be his example of the kind of husband to be (Ephesians 5:25). He is a faithful Christian.

The wife, who loves her husband and her children (Titus 2:4), is a keeper at home (Titus 2:5), is discreet and chaste (Titus 2:5), and wears the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (I Peter 3:4). She is subject to her husband (Ephesians 5:22-24), and trains her children to be in subjection to her and to their father (Ephesians 6:1, 2). She is a faithful Christian.

This man and woman, joined in marriage by God (Matthew 19:6), are totally committed to be married until death parts them (Romans 7:1-3). They are faithful to one another, and completely monogamous (Matthew 19:9). They love God and are faithful to His church and His word.

Now, stand back and look. What's wrong with this picture? The answer is NOTHING. This is God's ideal for marriage and the family. It is true that some faithful Christians cannot have this ideal arrangement due to problems beyond their control (Unmarried, married to an adulterous or abusive spouse, the death of

a spouse, a spouse who is an unbeliever, etc.), but this is nonetheless the ideal. Those who love the Bible as God's word are not embarrassed by the simple ideal for the home.

A recent *Time* magazine contained an article entitled, "How to make a marriage matter." (TIME, Sept. 6, 1993, Pg. 76). It described the erosion of America's definition of "family," and our destructive journey into no-fault divorce and disposable marriages. It bemoaned, "Over the past years, a growing body of evidence shows that children who grow up under the tutelage of people other than their natural parents are more likely to fail in school, have social difficulties and get arrested." So what's the answer to the problem of people putting too low a value on life-long marriage?

Some are advocating "Supervows" for betrothed couples. Supervows are legal contracts made between a man and woman detailing specifics for the future marriage which bind each party to keep his word. For instance, "... if either spouse requests marital counseling, the other promises to participate. If one asks for a divorce, he or she promises to wait at least six months to see if differences can be worked out..."

"Supervows"?? Are we ready for this? Some might say, "This is great. Supervows are just another way of doing marriage God's way." But that's sadly not true. You see, with supervows a couple is seeking to be bound by a

worldly legality, and hoping that this will strengthen their future together. Is this the right glue? Will this really stand the test of time better than what we've been doing? When the hard days come will the fact that both spouses once signed a legally binding document, supply the couple with the wherewithal to stay together?

Please see the vast contrast between that system, and God's system: In God's ideal home, the marriage license/ contract, though necessary to fulfill the laws of the land, has virtually nothing to do with the sacredness and value the husband and wife place on that marriage. The couple is in reality bound by the constant reminder that they love and serve God above all else, and one part of that service is being the kind of husband, wife, father, or mother God wants them to be. They love God first, and their family second. Their commitment to God is the foundation on which their marriage stands.

Even some Christians are attempting to re-shape God's ideal for the home to fit current trends. They manipulate and twist passages to change the role of women in the home. They ignore and make light of passages regulating divorce and remarriage. But their success is only in chipping away at God's ideal in the minds of those who will hear them. God's ideal is still safely in His book where it always has been. No, it isn't simply an outdated, nostalgic approach from the '40's and

BY NEAL POLLARD  
An important fact that we learn from the book of Psalms about David's life is that he prayed to and praised God at least as often in prosperous

'50's. It is God's design for the family -- yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Our efforts at creating long-lived marriage security without God are flimsy attempts at best, when compared to the "Supervows" God gave us. His are tried and true. Our faith in Him should surely extend behind the closed doors of matrimony and motivate us to do "family" His way.

Preachers, elders, counselors, confidants, hear me: We must not let this confused society deter us from pointing people again and again and again to God's ideal for marriage and the home. Let's tell them the truth.

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times as he did in the pits of infirmity and hardship. The Psalms are overflowing with statements like, "thy loving kindness is better than life (63:3), "enter into His gates with thanksgiving" (100:4), "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised" (119:62), and countless, similar statements. David realized what so many others forget, that God is the God of every hour of every day. David's spirituality was not one-dimensional; that is, David's contact with God was not limited only to his troubled moments. Sadly, God only hears from some of His children when they need something. Obviously, those individuals are not living a full life in Christ.

With regard to the problem of crisis, however, the godly inevitably turn to the Holy Father. To whom else can the righteous turn with their supplications and meet with as great and assurance of help? David said, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord" (Psalm 130:1, 2). The reason David would so turn is very simple. The Hebrews writer sums up his trust in God by proclaiming, "The Lord is my helper" (Hebrews 13:5). From Psalm 120:1, we examine an episode of crisis, David's reaction, where David turned, and the end of the matter.

THE REALITY OF CRISIS - "In my distress. . ." Adversity is one of the

Continued On Page 4

# Threat Of Apostasy

By Johnny Ramsey

Convenience has always been the mother of apostasy. Therefore the church, in every age, has been in the throes of and on the verge of departing from the truth because mankind seeks the easy way out! It takes courage, fortitude and determination to remain loyal and faithful and no effort at all to leave the moorings of the gospel. The line of least resistance makes crooked rivers and useless members of the church! The notable passage before us now, the fourth chapter of I Timothy, is a classic reminder of the constant challenge to remain committed to the Lord's cause forever and never to take that first short step on the long journey of apostasy that eventuates in hell. There are five major teachings in the evangelistic epistles known as I and II Timothy and Titus. These five principles of gospel truth permeate the thirteen chapters of the three books:

- (1) Qualifications of Elders
- (2) Preach The Word!
- (3) Keep The Church Pure
- (4) Live As An Example
- (5) Rebuke False Teachers

It is uniquely true that all five of these issues are desperately needed if we would offset error and stamp out apostasy. Very few would ever depart from the faith if we universally had qualified bishops, Bible-reaching evangelists, stalwart congregations, brethren who practiced purity of life and men of God who rebuked sin and exposed error! Sadly, in many local areas, several of these ingredients of soundness are missing and in some places they are actively opposed. It seems that the only thing some brethren oppose are those courageous folk who oppose untruth!

In II Thessalonians 2:7 Paul made it very clear, as God's inspired ambassador, that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work in the first century. In I John 4:1 and II Peter 2:1 great

servants of the Almighty plainly stated that many false prophets had already gone out into the world. Apostasy had marched upon the scene and had to be openly opposed and bluntly dealt with. Through the intervening centuries Satan and his emissaries have not been lazy or silent and today God's army must be on the alert constantly lest the devil gain an advantage over us (II Corinthians 2:11). If we fail to reprove such (Ephesians 5:11) we become partakers of their evil deeds (II John 11). Elders, especially must be on guard (Acts 20:28-32) and be able and willing to convict the gainsayers (Titus 1:9).

Paul made it crystal clear to Timothy, in the section before us at this time, that in his own day many would depart from the system of faith and even teach doctrines of demons. Such would harden the hearts of hearers and teachers alike and cause apostasy within the ranks of soldiers of Christ. Students of church history know full-well that such came to pass minutely. Sorrow upon sorrow resulted from the contamination of the pure, pristine stream that flowed from the mountain of the Lord's house (Isaiah 2:1-4; I Timothy 3:15). Had it not been for the courage and conviction of a small band of devoted saints, through the centuries, Satan and his host would have been victorious. The sufferings faithful and valiant Christians endured is a monumental tribute to the providence of God and the tenacity of the saints who would not turn their back upon the heavenly cause mandated by the Savior (Romans 8:18). When the Ephesian church tried those claiming to be apostles and proved them to be false, Christ commended the brethren there (Revelations 2:2). In Hebrews 3:12 and II Peter 3:17 members of the church were challenged to remain loyal to God and never to depart from steadfastness in the kingdom. In Hebrews 2:1-

3 Christians were encouraged to hold to the solid moorings of the gospel and never to drift away from nor to neglect the great salvation!

In the first few centuries of Christianity we see in the recorded history several examples of how apostasy comes about. In 251 A.D. we read of Novatian who wanted to compromise on the mode of baptism. In 325 we learn of Constantine who violated the fundamental issue of freedom of choice by forcing Christianity upon the people. In 416 the Roman church killed a man named Pelagius for the organization of the church produced Popery due to the oligarchy - or rule of a few - known as the Metropolitan Bishops in the fifth century. Instrumental music in worship was promulgated by Pope Vitalian in the middle of the sixth century after Christ. The clergy-laity system developed when robes and titles came upon the scene. By the Council of Ravenna in 1311, Rome declared that sprinkling was not the official mode of baptism. Lent, confessionals, purgatory, and praying through Mary and the saints had all gradually developed so that pure New Testament Christianity was exceedingly difficult to find! Elders in every church (Acts 14:23) overseeing the flock of God among them (I Peter 5:1-4) had almost vanished from the earth. Instead of simple worship and godly living (John 4:24; Matthew 5:8) one could mainly see pompous, hierarchal religiosity (Mark 7:9-13). By the seventeenth century religious division and confusion was the order of the day and the pristine beauty, of that for which Christ died, was obscured (Acts 20:28). The major points of emphasis should always be:

A. Christ Is Pre-Eminent And Not Man!

(Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18).

B. The Scriptures Are All-Sufficient!

(II Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 4:3)

C. Emotions Cannot Rule Over The Bible!

(Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 10:1-3)

D. Loyalty To Men Cannot Dominate!

(II John 9; Deut. 12:8; Proverbs 21:2).

Within the first century there were many severe groups that perverted the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). There were cruel enemies of the cross of Christ (Philippians 3:18-19) that led away disciples of the Redeemer. The most prominent group referred to in Scripture were the Judaizers who tried to elevate the rites of the Mosacial arrangements

above the covenant which Christ mediates (Hebrews 8). To allow such an emphasis caused Paul to remind brethren that Jesus would have died in vain (Galatians 2:21). The Gnostics had several errors concerning the nature of the Savior that led to carnal actions that polluted the morals of its followers. I John 1:1 contradicted the Docetists who denied that Jesus came in the flesh. The Ophites were basically Satan worshippers who foolishly endeavored to see how wicked they could be so as to please their god - the devil! Sadly, we have lots of folk today who seem determined to go to hell because of a liberated lifestyle.

## Pornography

BY MIKE BENSON

Dear Mike,

"Shouldn't a person have the right to watch or read *whatever* he pleases? As long as he watches or reads in the privacy of his own home, and *nobody* gets hurt, what difference does it make?"

1. **What a person "sows" in his mind determines how he will act.** "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. . ." (Proverbs 23:7a). "*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life*" (Proverbs 4:23).

**"Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit.**

**Sow a habit, reap a character.**

**Sow a character, reap a destiny!"**

2. **It is incorrect to suggest that "nobody gets hurt", for in reality, EVERYBODY gets hurt",** Consider:

• "A battery of researchers reported at the Canadian symposium that in the field of violent / pornographic movies, prolonged exposure to X-rated as well as R-rated films caused male college students to be 'desensitized' to rape and violence and more

accepting to the rape-myth that women say no when they really mean yes."

• "The FBI estimates that recreational killers murder 5,000 people in the U.S. Most of them, say FBI officials, feed on pornography."

• "A 1984 study released by the University of New Hampshire revealed that states with the highest readership of porn magazines such as *Playboy and Hustler*, etc., also had the highest rape rates."

• "Human Development Specialist Dr. Shirley O'Brien of the University of Arizona says that child pornography victimizes as many as 600,000 children in the United States. Victims include children as young as 3 years old and as old as 18."

• **Does the individual who reads and watches pornographic material hurt himself?** "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life*" (Galatians 6:7-8). **Is it really possible for "nobody**

Continued On Page 4

# A Genderless Church?

**John Gipson**

For some time now our society has seemed bent on getting rid of gender (something that is not going to be easily accomplished).

These pressures in society at large also affect religion. For example, the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible has done everything possible, it seems, to avoid gender-oriented language. Thus we read of "humankind," "Persons/person," "mortals," "human species," etc., to get

rid of words that have gender connotations. Even such a thing as "armed man" in Proverbs 6:11 has become "armed warrior." And "parents" is sometimes used to replace "fathers" and "a man." I don't know about you, but this all seems somewhat ridiculous to me. Political correctness! That's the name of the game.

Unfortunately, these attitudes often influence the church. I have always believed Galatians 3:28, "There is

neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." But I have never interpreted it, as some have, to mean that we need a "unisex" church, or that women can be elders, or preachers if they want to. There is equality in salvation. All have put on Christ; all belong to Christ. In Christ's law, women come to faith, baptism, and salvation on the same terms with men. They are equally acceptable to

God, but their gender has not changed. Paul knew, too, that slaves were still slaves even after they became Christians, but in Christ they enjoyed a common salvation with free men.

An interpretation of Galatians 3:28 which would cancel out the separate and distinct roles of men and women in the home or in the church is untenable. If becoming a Christian does away with gender, why did

Paul draw a line and put certain restrictions on women in the assembly (I Corinthians 11:3-16; 14:33-36; I Timothy 2:8-15)?

We need to be careful with our interpretation of scripture lest we walk down the street and fall into a personhole.

--Little Rock, Arkansas.

## The Godly In Crisis

Continued From Page 2

common denominators among men. In spiritual matters, those who live godly suffer because of their courageous convictions (I Timothy 3:12). King David once noted, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psalm 34:19). In his suffering, Job concluded, "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of troubles" (Job 14:1). To that, Paul and Barnabas would add that "we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). In II Timothy 2, as a natural part of being a disciple of Christ, Timothy was exhorted to "endure hardness" (verse 3) just as Paul, for preaching Christ, often had to "suffer trouble" (verse 9). Distress is a reality!

**THE REACTION TO CRISIS** - "I cried. . ." David did something very human. He reacted to his trouble. Under the weight of suffering, the knees of the most valiant warrior buckles. Under twice the weight, the knees of the godly, Christian soldier humbly bend in prayer. The advice of James was, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray" (James 5:13). Along with wearing the whole armor of God, the godly should be found by God "praying always with all prayer and supplication. . ." (Ephesians 6:18). David knew that he

needed help in his crisis.

**THE RESCUER FROM CRISIS** - "Unto the Lord. . ." David surely knew that, while man might forsake him, God never would. Yes, David knew his help came from the Lord (Psalm 121:2. Paul affirmed, "Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). We do not marvel to read the following words of David: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

**THE RESULT OF DAVID'S PRAYER IN CRISIS** - "And He heard me." James 5:16 ends with the words, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Peter said, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:12). To His disciples, Jesus declared, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you" (Matthew 7:7). The Lord hears the prayer of the righteous (cf Proverbs 15:29). The reason God listened to David's prayer was because David was God's child. The confidence of the prayer of the child of God is immeasurable!

Though problems are inevitable, they should never be deemed insurmountable by the Christian. God hears and answers the prayers of the godly. With that in mind, the song of the suffering will ever be, "I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).

be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love" (I Corinthians 16:13-14, ASV).

In another place, after discussing the mysteries of the resurrection, Paul wrote, "Wherefore, 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, ASV).

Here is comparatively a rather small band of the Lord's disciples. They are commanded to go and preach the gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). To them it must have seemed impossible. No money, to cars or airplanes, no television, no telephones, no printing presses, nothing, it

to get hurt"?

3. A Christian is to think on that which is PURE. "Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8). See also II Corinthians 10:5. As Wayne Jackson notes, "Pornography, sexually explicit movies, etc., have paved the way for many

## Pornography?

Continued From Page 3

an act of rape, adultery, incest, homosexuality, and other equally vile sins. . . *One simply cannot feed upon the impure and be pure!*"<sup>5</sup> See also Matthew 5:28, II Peter 2:14.

1. Cal Thomas, "Pornography, music cultivating violence?" The Tennessean, May 4, 1989.

2. "Key Stats," A Guide To What One Person Can Do About Pornography, American Family Association, p. 15.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Wayne Jackson, "A Prescription for Mental Health" The Book of Philippians, p. 82.

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## The Curse Of Pessimism

Continued From Page 1

seems - But they believe their Master, they obey His commands, they leave the City of Jerusalem and begin telling the world about Jesus Christ. In a few years the gospel is "preached to every creature which is under Heaven" (Colossians 1:6, 23).

Isn't it amazing? We possess all the things which did not have, yet, somehow we cannot carry the gospel to all the world as they did. Why? Is it because we lack the faith and the dedication which they possessed?? We ask, Why, why??

Have we been fishing too close to the shore? Luke 5:1-11, tells of how the Lord's disciples had been fishing all night, but had caught nothing. Jesus said to them, "Put out into the deep," and when they

followed His orders, they "enclosed a great multitude of fishes." Brethren, our marching orders are to go and go we must!! There are thousands of congregations of the church of Christ that need to be established.

Optimism is the enthusiasm that works. Optimism is that power which helps us to overcome our frustrated efforts, our thwarted hopes, and our ever-present problems.

This is a time for profound thought: Peter believed that his life could be better, even though he had denied the Lord Jesus Christ three times. Judas' pessimism led him to commit suicide. What a difference.

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

February 18, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Is Everything A Man Does In His Christian Life Worship?
- Free To Decide
- Growing Old
- What Kind Of Church Member Are You?
- Poor, Foolish, Lost, And Uninformed
- "Most Of A Minute"
- A Meek And Quiet Spirit
- One Nation Under God

Volume 30 Number 8  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- Act

## The Purpose Of Life

### Johnny Ramsey

In the busy hustle-bustle of life it is good to pause frequently and soberly ask ourselves: "What is the purpose of living? Why am I here? What shall I do with my talents and abilities? What heritage shall I leave my children?"

These questions are of the utmost importance because, as Edgar A. Guest so graphically wrote:

"One day we will stand with empty hands, and wonder what we were worth."

At the close of time, before God's judgment, we will count as vain and foolish the material possessions acquired on earth. All those things that perish with using and that shall be consumed in the brightness of the Lord's coming, are certainly inferior to the eternal values of spirituality. In II Peter 3:11 the context discusses the end of the world and all that exists therein. Notice the emphasis of that verse:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness."

When time shall be no more and that great day of reckoning arrives we shall have lost all interest in houses, land, fancy furnishings, automobiles, credit ratings and the finery of mundane affairs. Only those things that have been done for Christ will last.

It is so foolish to spend our sojourn here below trying "to keep up with the Joneses." About the time we catch up with them they just "refinance" and off we go again in the absurd "rat-race" of materialism.

Epicurus, who lived several centuries before Christ, taught that man was wholly mortal. Therefore, since "this life is all," he said: "Eat, drink and be merry -- for tomorrow we die!" Epicurus has many followers in the Simi Valley today! Is it possible that some are even in the church?

Daniel Webster, one of America's all-time great speakers, once said:

"If we write on marble it will perish.

If on brass time will efface it.  
If we rear temples they will crumble into dust

But if we work upon immortal minds

And imbue them with the just fear of God

And love for their fellow-men

We write upon those tablets something that

Will brighten for all eternity."

What on earth are we doing for Heaven's sake? Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). As Edwin Markham so aptly put it:

We build cities in vain -- unless man, the builder, also grows! Let us do more than tear down barns and build greater barns (Luke 12:15-21).

God called the one who did this a fool! Our purpose in life is to build greater people -- always fashioned in and growing unto the glorious image of the Lord. Notice the powerful, compelling language of I Peter 2:11:

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

May we never again put a premium on the cotton-candy froth of temporal things. Let

us press on to that "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Then we can sincerely sing:

"Take the world but give me Jesus

All its joys are but a name  
But His love abideth ever

Through the endless years  
The same."

**First Things First**  
One of the strongest passages in the Bible

emphasizing the wisdom and necessity of putting the Lord absolutely first is Psalms 132:3-5:

"I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

May we wisely make this our emphasis in life!

## "Whom Thou Servest Continually"

### Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

These quoted words form a prominent part of that beautiful tribute King Darius paid the devout Daniel at the end of his sleepless night during which Jehovah's faithful prophet had boldly and bravely confronted the vicious lions. The king had been tricked into signing a Medo-Persian law (where repeals were impossible) forbidding any person in the empire to ask a request of any save the king for thirty days. Such a decree did not detour Daniel from his devout life of prayer day by day. He prayed thrice daily just as in former times when no decree was binding to prohibit such prayers. Daniel's enemies requested the king to execute the law. The king sought vainly to deliver Daniel but

was unable to achieve success in the expended effort. This law was above the king's repeal when once signed into law. The Persian monarch assured Daniel that "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (Daniel 6:16). After passing a sleepless night accompanied with fasting the king hurried to the lions' den the next morning. With stirring tones of lament in his voice the moved monarch said, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions" (Daniel 6:20)? With a valiant victory in his trusting grasp Daniel answered in the affirmative for the deeply moved Persian ruler.

Daniel's light was not concealed amidst the Medo-

Persian Empire. It shone brilliantly. His king and his adamant enemies knew of his constant attachment to the God he served with force, fervency and frequency. His was no seasonal religion. His light of religion burned boldly and brightly at all times. Daniel's religion was of conviction -- not convenience.

What of us? Do our associates picture us as people who serve God continually? There is a great deal of difference between serving when it is convenient and serving continually. Felix wanted a religion of convenience in Acts 24:24ff. Convenience paves a sure way to Hadean torments and hell at last.

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

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Is Everything A Man Does In His Christian Life Worship?

--A Look At Romans 12:1

Glenn Colley

This title raises an interesting and heavily discussed question, and to answer it one must define what is meant by "worship." The most common word in the New Testament translated "worship" is PROSKUNEO. It is always translated "worship." Thayer defines this word, "To kiss the hand (toward) one, in token of reverence . . . In the New Testament by kneeling or prostrating to do homage to one or to make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication." Out of the 72 times the word worship is found in the King James Translation, 59 of those come from the original word, PROSKUNEO. A clear illustration of the word is found in Matthew 4:9, 10: ". . . and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship (PROSKUNEO) me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship (PROSKUNEO) the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

While PROSKUNEO is the Greek word most commonly found translated "worship," it is not the only word translated "worship." SEBOMAI, occurring ten times, means, "To reverence, hold in awe." While PROSKUNEO emphasizes the outward show of reverence, this word emphasizes the inward feeling of reverence or awe.

LATREUO is sometimes translated "worship." It occurs 21 times, and means,

"To render religious services or homage, to worship." It is a broader, more general word than the other two, in that it refers to all of Christian service, not just worship. It is true that all worship is service, but not all service is worship. All that a man does in his Christian walk is service to God and glorifies Him, but not all a man does in that life is worship. LATREUO can be translated "worship" correctly if the context permits the usage.

That brings us to Romans 12:1. Consider three different translations of this verse:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (King James)

"Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- which is your spiritual worship." (New International)

"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (New American Standard)

I have underlined the key words for our consideration. This informative and precious verse describes the Christian lifestyle as a "living sacrifice." That is, all we do in our lives as Christians is in service to our Maker. As Paul wrote later, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

The Greek word in question is LATREUO.

Now, remember that LATREUO can be translated "service" or "worship," depending on the context. The translators of the KJV believed that to take a context that obviously depicted the whole Christian life and call it worship would contradict what they knew from other passages about the nature of worship. Their translation is the right one. All of Christian living is to the glory and service of God. All of Christian living is not worship.

Read through the Old and New Testaments where worship is discussed, and note the fact that where details are given, worship is punctuated by a beginning and an ending. For example, Abraham said, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship" (Genesis 22:5). The wise men said, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). Paul said, "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship" (Acts 24:11).

Because worship must be "in spirit and in truth," (John 4:24), it is important that we understand the difference between Christian service and Christian worship. There are many things which would be suitable for me to do in my private life, which would be wholly inappropriate in worship to God.

## Free To Decide

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"Do you think that a person is free to decide as to whether or not he will follow God, OR does God simply 'move' him to obey?"

This is an extremely important question. Please consider the following passages:

1. "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, *choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve*, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*" (Joshua 24:15).

•According to this passage, is an individual free to choose for himself as to whether or not he will serve the Lord?

•Can a person choose not to serve the Lord?

•Was Joshua free to decide as to whether or not he would serve the Lord? What did he decide?

•See also I Kings 18:21.

2. "If any man willeth to do

his will, *he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself*" (John 7:17).

•According to this passage, does a person have a will?

•What does the possession of a "will" imply about a person's role in his own salvation?

•See also Luke 15:18; Matthew 23:37.

3. "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'come!' And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

•According to this passage, can an individual desire to come to Christ (i.e., "take the water of life freely")?

•According to this passage, can an individual desire to come to Christ (i.e., "take the water of life freely")?

•According to this passage, is it possible for a person to act upon such a desire?

•See also Matthew 11:28.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

### Growing Old

As I grow old, it seems that I

Grow old as does the western sky

When day is drawing to its close,

For life takes on a tint of rose

I had not known in life's hot noon.

Now in the night that comes so soon,

I see new stars I had not seen,

A surer faith, a peace serene

As I grow old.

As I grow old, the winds of life

Die down. The hate, the strife,

The waters calm, the waves are still;

I want no triumphs, wish no ill

To any man. Now from my heart

The ancient angers all depart,

New friends I know, new songs are sung,

New joys are mine -- yes, I grow young

As I grow old!

--Douglas Malloch



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# What Kind Of Church Member Are You?

W. A. Holley

It is time for members of the Lord's church to take an inventory of themselves. What are you worth to the church? Are you an asset or a liability? Do you help or hinder the progress of the church? Do you use your talents or bury them (Matthew 25:14-30).

If you read the history of the Lord's church as it is recorded in the New Testament, you will find we have always had good and bad members. What about Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)? A Corinthian church member married his father's wife (I Corinthians 5:1-13). Hymenaeus and Philetus had erred from the truth (II Timothy 1:17-18). These represent but a few of those early Christians who turned away from the faith.

Herewith, we shall list a few examples of what we have in mind:

(1) There are those members who follow "afar off." At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Peter followed Him "afar off" (Matthew 26:58). Many church members, like Peter, don't want to be too closely involved in the work of the church. These hang back, but they will reluctantly serve if they are pushed.

(2) Some become members of the church because they are "bread seekers." Jesus said of some who came to him, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6:26). Some have selfish motives. This preacher can relate stories of some who were baptized in order to obtain aid and in some instances to get a wife or husband. The genuine spirit is giving, not receiving (Acts 20:35).

(3) Some members of the church are "glory seekers." They will serve if they can be in charge. Diotrephes was such a member. He had to have the preeminence. Those who stood in his way, he cast out. He had a "Big I, and little you," complex. He was the boss and wanted everyone to know it.

This sort of thing causes

many problems. In the army not every soldier can be a general. The Lord recognized this problem when He set certain qualifications for elders and deacons (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4). Like Haman, one can have such high regard for his position it is easy for him to be offended (See the Book of Esther).

(4) Some members become super critics. These are skilled at finding fault. Jealousy breeds criticism. Dear Christian friend, never point a finger of scorn at another, for in so doing you are pointing three fingers at your own self. Those who are working to please God must remember, criticism comes with the territory. "To avoid criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing" (E. Hubbard).

In John 12:3-8, Judas criticized Mary's anointing of Jesus. Remember, no matter how unfounded adverse criticism may be, there are those who join in and echo it.

Judas wanted to give to the poor, he claimed, but the truth was, he was a thief who stole from the funds given to aid the poor (John 12:4-6). One's reason for criticism may be very different from what he says. There may be impure motives.

Remember, Jesus Christ was the finest person who ever lived, but He could not avoid criticism (Philippians 3:18).

(5) Are you a busybody, a meddler, a whisperer, or a backbiter? A backbiter is one who engages in secret slander (II Corinthians 12:20; Romans 1:29-30). One can be a busybody in the affairs of others. There are some who are not busied in their own business, but are overbusied in that of others.

Brother W. Claude Hall advised his preacher boys: "Spend half of your time in taking care of your own business, and the other half in letting others alone."

(6) Are you a fussy, irritable member who has a hard time getting along with others? Paul wrote, "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord"

(Philippians 4:2, ASV). These were two prominent women in the Philippian church who were irritating each other. To "be of the same mind," means to cultivate harmony of thought and disposition. Reconciliation, where differences exists, is always in order (I Corinthians 7:11; Matthew 5:24). "No Christian should attend the Lord's assembly with his fighting clothes on" (Brother Gus Nichols).

(7) Christian friend, do you attend the Lord's assembly

reluctantly, somehow wishing you did not have to be there? Is your attendance a sort of distasteful chore which you somehow endure?

David, Israel's sweetest singer wrote, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:23-24). The Lord's day belongs unto Him (Revelation 1:10). It is a sin to visit Grandma when you ought to be assembling together with the saints (Acts

20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-26).

Christian friends, what kind of a church member are you? Do you know that you must answer to God Almighty for your deeds? "Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm 44:21).

"What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him" (Job 31:14)?

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

## Poor, Foolish, Lost, And Uninformed

Neal Pollard

Who would God describe in such a way? Over whom could God look and fail to find a real man in the streets of their chief city? To whom could God be referring when He calls this people false swearers? What godless nation would bow at the altars of adultery, treachery, and idolatry? Surely, such iniquity was not whispered even in the camps of Admah, Zeboiim, Sodom, or Gomorrah! The people described by God through Jeremiah could not have had any exposure to the providence, miracles, or judgment of the Almighty! Could they?

Jeremiah five is completely filled with the judgments of God against Judah. Despite the heritage and promise they owned as descendants of Abraham, these Jews had taken a vow of spiritual poverty (4). Even though they had the wisdom of the law, the chosen nation was overrun with fools (4). Though they had the directions of God at their disposal, they had wandered aimlessly away from the right way (4). Heedless of God's unchanging judgment, they had degenerated into religious illiteracy (4). Why would a prophet of God call the people of God such names?

**They were stricken, but not grief-stricken (Jeremiah 5:3).** Since He expelled Adam and Eve from the garden, God has demonstrated that He will

punish wrongdoing. Such is a part of God's immutable

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**Have you ever heard of a placebo? Sometimes doctors, realizing that their patients only think they are sick when they really are not, have prescribed placebos -- tablets that look like real medicine, but are, in reality, harmless sugar pills.**

**Sometimes people have the view that teaching from God's word is like that placebo. It makes some people feel better, but only because they believe themselves to be in need of God's approval. Is hearing and obeying God's word, the Bible, really something that all people need?**

**The answer is YES! I John 1:8 says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." James 1:22 then says, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."**

## A Meek And Quiet Spirit

Cindy Colley

A meek and quiet spirit  
Let me wear with joy I pray.  
Let those jewels of the heart  
Grace my spirit, Lord, today.

Take from me the pearls of riches  
That would keep me, Lord, from thee.  
Drape me with the pearls of wisdom;  
That thy spirit I may see.

Let me not, like James and John,  
Seek the place of grandest fame.  
Remind me that the Saviour  
As a servant humbly came.

Let me be the virtuous woman;  
Seeking good through all my days.  
Give me wealth far more than rubies;  
In the gates, rewards of praise.

--203 Wildwood, Dr., Jasper, AL 35501.

# One Nation Under God?

**Glenn VanZandt**

Each year in America 1.5 million abortions take place. That is one abortion every 22 seconds. Motorists are being gunned down in their cars. Drugs continue to be a problem as well as sex outside of marriage, and with it the threat of AIDS. Homosexuals are now out of the closet, they are given favorable coverage by the media.

Sadly, we are no longer "one nation under God." We are now a nation in moral confusion. In America, anything goes, and there are no absolutes. In the minds of many, there is no standard of right and wrong. Consider three scriptures from God's word that will explain how we got to where we are.

**Romans 1:18-32**

I encourage you to read Romans 1:18-32. Notice the progression of Gentile sin. Notice carefully Romans 1:21-22, 28. The first step to moral chaos and confusion: They left God! The end result of leaving God is revealed in Romans 1:29, "being filled with all unrighteousness."

Last night on the news a story ran about a young man that was shot and killed while at school. They interviewed the broken-hearted mother. She said, "Something has got to be done. We need to start teaching values and morals in our schools."

Just this morning on a talk show, the problem of homicide was the topic. A panel of experts sat and discussed the problem and possible solutions. Most agreed that gun control was the answer. Finally, a young man from the audience stood up and said, "Don't you think that the lack of morals is the real reason we are seeing so many people killed?"

No God, no morals. When man leaves God, he gets more than he bargains for. As a nation we have left God, and we are now reaping what we have sown.

**Judges 17:6**

"There was no king in Israel during those days, everyone did what was right in their

own eyes." In other words, without a king each person became a law unto themselves. I think this is true of our situation in America today. We have left God, and now we find ourselves in a difficult situation. Without God there is no right and wrong, there are no absolutes.

Therefore, we find ourselves in a difficult situation when we start talking about teaching morals and values in our public schools. What would be our standard? Perhaps it would be what Mr. Wayne Dyer suggested on a CNN talk show. Mr. Dyer is a psychoanalyst, and on the show they were talking about teaching sexuality to kids in school. Mr. Dyer said, "We need to teach kids to look within, and to do what feels right for them." Is it any wonder that our nation is in such a mess?

**Jeremiah 10:23**

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps? From the creation men have tried in vain to direct their lives without God. It has not

worked. It is not working and it will not work. The confusion that we have today in our country is the result of men trying to direct their lives without God. They try in vain. Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace."

God has given us a pattern to follow, a standard. That standard is the BIBLE. The

Bible must be the foundation on which we build our lives (Matthew 7:24-26). The Bible must be the standard on which we build our family, the church, and our nation. The first step to restore America, is to go back to God, and to go back to God is to go back to the BIBLE.

Let me challenge the church by asking: Where is our influence? Have we become

so conformed to the world and the liberal theology around us that we have lost our ability and desire to be different? May God help us to wake up and have the courage to stand for God and His word in such a way that we will truly be "ONE NATION UNDER GOD."

--Route 2, Box 311-AA, Brundidge, AL 36010.

## Poor, Foolish, Lost, And Uninformed

Continued From Page 3

holiness. On Judah He had showered punishment for sin (cf. Jeremiah 2:29-30). Like those to whom Paul speaks in Titus 1:16, Judah professed that they knew God, but in works they denied Him (5:2). While from the tongue of the weeping prophet flowed the warning of imminent captivity to punish sin, they happily continued in hypocrisy and immorality. They could not shed tears, even with the knowledge that they were hurting God with their crimes.

How is the conscience soothed? Either an individual will flee sin or fellowship it. When a person is engaged in iniquity, he will either buckle under his guilt or he will sear his conscience to keep the guilt away. Judah could not, in good conscience, commit spiritual adultery. Hence, they killed their conscience. Truly, a man suffers a legion of spiritual wounds from sin. To live with himself and continue in sin, a man must insulate himself from remorse. Such a quarantine separates a man from God and salvation.

They were consumed, but not consumed with obedience (Jeremiah 5:3). In the furnace of correction, God had consumed His children with the fire of denunciation. Using His prophets as His mouthpiece, God instructed Judah to obey Him. Unlike the prodigal son in the far country of sin, God's chosen had learned nothing from their punishment. In contrast with such a defiant spirit, one finds Jeremiah, though desiring to refrain from speaking the

word of God, unable to keep away from his task (cf. 20:9). Unfortunately, Jeremiah's attitude toward God's will was far from infectious.

A beautiful picture of obedience is painted by Luke in Acts 4:20. There, the account of Peter and John before the council records Peter's brave response, "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." Completely convinced that the Lord's way is not just the best way, but also the right way, the truly converted Christian will be consumed with their desire to please the God who gave His very best to be the propitiation for their sins! The committed child of God is determined to obey. They would never act like Judah, immaturely setting their face in defiance.

They were determined, but not determined to return to God (Jeremiah 5:3). They were lost, but they refused to return. Conviction is more attractive than is fickleness, but a resolve to live in sin is fatal. Judah was wallowing in apostasy, but had already made up their mind to keep away from the very Power which sustained them. Jeremiah lamented the stubbornness of his brethren.

Resolve is a wonderful thing, if a person's goal is to preserve for righteousness' sake! But, what thing is important enough to cause a man to remain on the wrong

side of the divine standard? What earthly treasure can compare to the riches of God's grace? What lust of the flesh can measure up to the pure love of God? What goal surpasses the beautiful home of the soul? Foolish is the determination to prevent one's self from inheriting eternal happiness!

Because Judah was so well acquainted with the holy nature of God, Jeremiah could only conclude, "Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God" (5:4). The condition of alien sinners is pitiable, for they are ignorant of the full, serene life available to the Christian. They do not know the peace available to the faithful, obedient (cf. John 14:27). How much worse is the condition of one who was once enlightened, but who falls away (cf. Hebrews 6:4)? What is the latter end of those who are entangled again in that woeful life they had escaped by becoming a new creature (see II Peter 2:20-22)? Gushing forth from the fountain of life are the spiritual blessings to those children of God who are sorry for their sins, consumed by their desire to obey the Lord, and determined to come back home when they are engaged in sin.

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February 25, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Does "Unequally Yoked" Always Apply To Marriage?
- Is Everything We Do Worship?
- Fourteen Beautiful Traits Of Salvation From I Peter 1
- We Need To Stay With The Pattern!
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Five Points To Ponder

Volume 30 Number 9  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Abel's Hermeneutic

Winfred Clark

We are hearing a great deal these days about hermeneutics. This is a word that has to do with "the science of interpretation." It has to do with how one interprets the Bible or God's word.

It seems to me that Abel's hermeneutic, or method of interpretation, should be of interest to us. We are told "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" (Hebrews 11:4). We would have to conclude from this passage a number of things. One, God's word was present in the matter. This has to be the case for it is said that Abel, "by faith offered . . .". We all know that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). We are not left to wonder then about whether or not Abel had known the word of God. He would not know to offer anything without God's word, nor would he know what to offer without God's word.

Two, he could come to a conclusion as to what he was to offer by what God said. Three, he could also come to a conclusion as to what was excluded as a sacrifice to God.

### HIS HERMENEUTIC BROUGHT HIM GOD'S APPROVAL

We note that "the Lord had

respect unto Abel and his offering" (Genesis 4:4). Then we also note, "by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4). But why are these things said about Abel? Do they not grow out of the fact that he followed the instructions he had been given concerning the matter of sacrifice? His interpretation of God's word caused him to do that which would please God. We could say his hermeneutic enabled him to please God. By his faith in God's word he was pleasing to God. A man can properly interpret what God has to say to us and be well pleasing to him in the process.

This should be encouraging to those of us who live today. We are assured by this fact that we can indeed interpret God's word so we can faithfully do the things he would have us to do. Abel was a human being who was able to make a proper application of God's word and receive the approval of God in the process. That is indeed an encouraging fact.

### HIS HERMENEUTIC MADE HIM DISTINCTIVE

In Abel we have one who would interpret the word of the Lord to mean what it says. When it says "sacrifice," he would take that to mean "sacrifice." When it says of the flock, he would take that to mean "of the flock." He would place no interpretation on it to make it mean any more or any less. But that sort

of interpretation would mark him as different from Satan. Remember his dealings with the word of the Lord in the book of Genesis. One has but to move back a single chapter to find another kind of hermeneutic. We find Satan saying, "Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of the every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1). We later find Satan saying of God's word, "ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). His hermeneutic led him to say that God did not mean what he said. This would have to be the case, for God had surely said, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). There is a marked difference in the hermeneutic of Satan and Abel.

We also find a difference between Abel and Cain. Remember that Cain offered a sacrifice that differed from the kind Abel offered (Genesis 4:3). This offering was not accepted by the Lord. It did not have God's approval. But Cain had access to the same word that Abel had. If that were not the case then God would be a respecter of persons! What makes the difference? There could be the difference in hermeneutic. Would Cain interpret God's silence as allowing a substitute for the right kind of sacrifice? You know he could do that. There are men who interpret the silence of God as allowing just about anything they want to introduce into the

worship.

Since there is a difference in the hermeneutic of Abel and Satan, and a difference in his hermeneutic and that of Cain, what changes do you think ought to be made? Should Abel give up that which makes him distinctive so as to be like Satan and Cain? Should he adopt a new hermeneutic so as to be like those two? Should he make a change that would allow him to endorse the idea of eating the forbidden fruit or offering an unauthorized sacrifice to God? Should he adopt a method of interpretation that would allow him to be in fellowship with everybody, no matter what their hermeneutic might be? Stop and think a moment: If he adopted a hermeneutic that would allow him to endorse what Cain offered unto God, then he would be endorsing that which God would not accept. Remember, "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Genesis 4:5). Would we advise a person to adopt a hermeneutic that would place him in opposition to God?

Suppose there was going to be a unity meeting between Cain and Abel. Suppose the subject of interpretation came up. Suppose Cain were to say, "the thing that divides us in your hermeneutic." What would you propose that Abel do under the circumstances? Should he lay aside his method of interpretation because Cain has said such

divides us? Should an interpretation that has God's endorsement be set aside because someone like Cain was not pleased with such? If Abel laid aside his hermeneutic, should he then adopt the hermeneutic of Cain? If he did would he be any better off than Cain? Would God approve a wrong hermeneutic just because Abel adopted such? But, how could you then have unity? Would it not grow out of Cain's changing his method of interpretation to that which would meet God's approval? If that happened, productive unity would occur.

### HIS HERMENEUTIC WILL LEAD TO

#### PROPER CONCLUSIONS

When Abel was told to offer an animal sacrifice, he had the word of the Lord. Now how would he handle the instructions that were given? How would he interpret these? Would he interpret them in such a way that would cause him to reach a wrong conclusion? It is obvious that one could reach a wrong conclusion, for Cain surely did.

We know that the hermeneutic of Abel led him to the right conclusions, for God approved of what he offered in sacrifice to Him. That is a comforting thought. We can know beyond all doubt that when we interpret God's word to mean what it says and then do what it says

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

# Is Everything We Do Worship?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"Would it be appropriate to say that all we do in life is

worship? To me, worship more than what happens Sunday morning, it's what happens throughout every day as we serve God . . . "

This is a thoughtful question. Let's go to the Word of God for an answer:

1. Scriptural worship involves specific acts\* which can be distinguished from everyday affairs of life.

"And Abraham said to young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you" (Genesis 22:5).

•Where did Abraham and Isaac were going?

•What did Abraham and Isaac intend to do when they reached the mountain (22:18)?

•Was Abraham already engaged in worship when he spoke to his young men?

"So David arose from the ground and anointed himself and changed his clothes; he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate" (II Samuel 12:20).

•Did David engage in worship when/as he was anointed himself?

•Did David engage in worship when/as he changed his clothes?

•What did David do when he went into the house of the Lord?

•Did David engage in worship when/as he ate a meal?

See also I Samuel 1:19, 30. Continued On Page 4

## Does "Unequally Yoked" Always Apply To Marriage?

Glenn Colley

It has long been my view that II Corinthians 6:14 can, but doesn't necessarily, apply to the marriage of a Christian to an unbeliever. The verse says,

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

What is prohibited here? Does this teaching forbid a Christian from marrying an unbeliever? Would it further forbid a believer from *staying* married to an unbeliever? These are good questions.

First, examine key words. "Unequally yoked together" comes from one Greek word, "HETEROZUGEO." This is the only time the word occurs in the New Testament. Thayer says of this word, "Yoked with a different yoke; used in Leviticus 19:19 of the union of beasts of different kinds, e.g. an ox and an ass . . . to have fellowship with one who is not an equal."

It is important to see that what Paul is forbidding is not being yoked together with unbelievers, but rather being *unequally* yoked together with unbelievers.

Consider then, this interpretation: Paul is teaching that while we naturally interact with unbelievers in a variety of ways, we must not give *any* unbeliever the authority to command us to do wrong. The Lord must *always* be our Master. The picture of being unequally yoked would be one in which the believer was yoked together with a larger, stronger unbeliever who could guide

the union at will.

This interpretation makes good sense. If Paul was forbidding ALL relationships or covenants with unbelievers, not only would it be wrong to marry one, it would also be wrong to become a business partner with one or even DO business with one!

Having said this, let's raise this question: *Can* it be a sin for a Christian to marry an unbeliever? The answer, using this verse alone, would have to be *yes*. When the believing mate gives the unbelieving mate the permission to lead him or her into unrighteousness, the believer has sinned. He or she is unequally yoked to that unbeliever. Those of us who have been part of the church for many years have seen this scenario played over and over in the lives of Christians who married unbelievers and then soon forsook the Lord and His church. All Christians must be married to Christ first, and our allegiance belongs to Him.

This is the situation Paul had in mind in the first Corinthian letter, chapter seven. In verse 13 he penned, "And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now they are holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy

husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

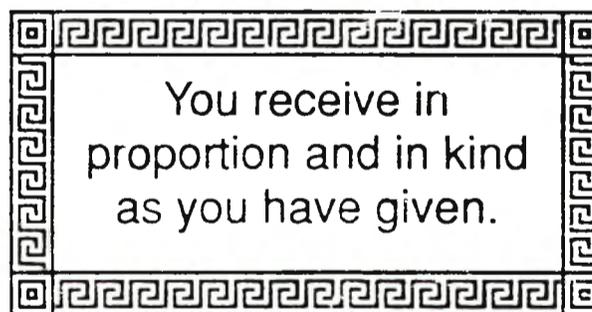
Is the believing wife to leave her unbelieving husband? No. Are they really married in the eyes of God, and therefore their children legitimate? Yes. Suppose the unbelieving husband bitterly resents the believing wife's Christianity and decides he can't live with her and her righteousness. Is she under bondage to his wishes? Must she follow his ungodliness? The Apostle answers no. If he feels he must depart, let him. That believing wife must remain faithful to Christ even if it means her husband leaves. Incidentally, this situation would not free her to remarry (I Corinthians 7:10-11).

I do not consider the Christian's decision to marry a non-Christian a

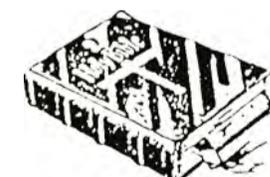
wise decision. Hard days will likely follow. However, if you are married to an unbelieving mate, I want to encourage you to commit to memory I Peter 3:1-2:

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation by the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation (Faithful Christian lifestyle, GC), coupled with fear."

Hold to the unchanging hand. Seek the conversion of your unbelieving mate, and never give up. Let your mate know that following Christ is the most important goal in your life. One day you may enjoy the warm embrace of that husband or wife as they leave the refreshing waters of baptism. That is my hope and prayer.



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# Fourteen Beautiful Traits Of Salvation From I Peter 1

Neal Pollard

The adjective used by the Hebrews writer is intensive in Hebrews 2:3; he calls salvation "so great." Salvation is as mighty and thorough as the spiritual death, so great, from which we were delivered by God (cf. II Corinthians 1:10). Salvation is celebrated by the inspired writers throughout God's word. It is eternal (Hebrews 5:9). It was brought about by God's grace (Titus 2:11). It is extended by the longsuffering of the Lord (II Peter 3:15). It is the common tie between those who are beloved in God the Father, or Christians (cf. Jude 3).

Peter encourages suffering Christians to concentrate on the blessings of salvation in the book of I Peter. Children of God enduring grief and suffering wrongfully only because they professed Christ (cf. I Peter 2:9) were assured by Peter that salvation transcended such hardship. In chapter one, Peter gives at least fourteen reasons why salvation is so wonderful.

**IT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOD'S ABUNDANT MERCY (3).** God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4). Like David, we can trust in the mercy of God (cf. Psalms 52:8) because He sent Christ Jesus to this world to save sinners that sinners might obtain mercy (cf. I Timothy 1:13-16).

**IT IS EFFECTED BY CHRIST'S RESURRECTION (3).** If Christ was not resurrected from the tomb, our faith is vanity and we are still under the sentence of sin (I Corinthians 1:19). If Christ was not resurrected from the tomb, the patriarchs were deceived (cf. Hebrews 11:19), the prophets were demented (cf. Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14), the psalmist was dishonest (Psalm 16:10), the preachers were deluded (cf. I Corinthians 15:14), and even the Prince of Peace is disparaged (cf. Luke 24:6, 7; John 10:18). But, now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that are asleep (I Corinthians 15:20)! Romans 6

ties the resurrection to our salvation (4-10, 22-23).

**IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN INHERITANCE (4).** The inheritance is incorruptible (cf. I Corinthians 9:25). The inheritance is undefiled (cf. Revelation 22:1). The inheritance is fadeless (cf. I Peter 5:4). The inheritance is reserved in heaven (John 14:2-4).

**IT KEEPS THE FAITHFUL SAINTS (5).** It keeps them by God's power (cf. Romans 1:16). It keeps them through their submissive and obedient faith (Ephesians 2:8 plus James 2:22-26).

**IT CAUSES GREAT JOY (6).** Enjoying justification and having peace, the saint rejoices in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2). Baptized by Philip and, at that point saved, the eunuch went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39).

**IT IS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY TRIAL (6-8).** Though trials are often viewed negatively and despite the fact that Peter describes them as troubling and varying, he points to the end of them. They are brief when compared to eternity. Additionally, the trial of our precious faith leads to blessings at Christ's appearing, loving Him who is unseen, and the reception of the end of our triumphant faith (the salvation of our souls)!

**IT WAS A SALVATION LOOKED FOR BY THE PROPHETS (10-12).** The grace they foresaw was successfully accomplished in God's scheme of redemption (10)! All prophecy concerning the Savior was fulfilled by Him in minute, incontrovertible detail! Its greatness is portrayed in such great anticipation.

**IT IS TO BE BROUGHT AT THE REVELATION OF CHRIST (13).** Ponder the blessed assurance of Paul, who said, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels . . ." (II Thessalonians 1:7). Faith will be lost in heavenly sight!

**IT MOTIVATES A**

**CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR (14-16).** Peter mentions two traits of the transformation. First, we become characterized by obedience (cf. Romans 6:17). Also, we are marked by holy living (cf. II Peter 3:11).

**IT IS OFFERED BY THE FATHER (17).** He is no respecter of persons (cf. Acts 10:34-35). He judges according to works and not prejudices (Revelation 22:12).

**IT IS A SPECIAL REDEMPTION (18-21).** It cannot be purchased with material things. It was purchased with Christ's blood (cf. Revelation 1:5). It was foreknown before the creation (Acts 2:23). It causes faith in

God.

**IT COMES THROUGH OBEDIENCE (22).** Jesus is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). There are no riddles to decipher, no impossible, daring feats to perform. Simply, obedience to God's terms leads one to salvation!

**IT CAUSES FERVENT LOVE FOR OTHER SAINTS (23).** Salvation is the tie that binds the hearts of Christians. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14). Fervent love is a fulfilling investment in the lives of the like-minded.

**IT IS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE NEW BIRTH**

(23-25). Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This new birth is revealed in the everlasting word, the word Isaiah promised "shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:6-8). Salvation is a fresh start, a new life, and a better heritage.

How thankful we should ever be that salvation is so full and free.

How great the everlasting love of the gracious Father up above.

What wondrous blessings ever flow from the Savior pure as snow.

With the ransomed always sing, to great salvation always cling!

--P.O. Box 15, Livingston, AL 35470.

## We Need To Stay With The Pattern!

Don Williams

"Hold the pattern of sound words, which thou hast heard of men, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 1:13, ASV).

Among our brotherhood today, there are two divergent cries ringing through the land. One cry goes like this: "Enough of the pattern mentality." The Bible was not written to give us a "how to do" course in living the Christian life. The book of Acts was written for the first century church, but many factors enter into today's church that they did not have to deal with. The epistles of Paul were nothing but love letters, and they have no contemporary applications for the twentieth century church. We must adapt to our environment, regardless of what that may bring."

Thankfully, there is another cry that is also being heard. That is a cry of getting back to the "old paths" of doing things according to the Bible. Those who cry this suggest that within holy writ one can find a pattern, a God-approved blueprint for doing those things that would meet with God's approval. Such a blueprint is seen in the early days of Israel, when Moses

was instructed by God, "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exodus 25:9). When Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, used strange and unauthorized fire before God, they were destroyed by fire. God has set forth a prescribed way of offering the incense, and man was not to tamper or try to change this way. Although we do not live under the law of the Old Testament today,

(Ephesians 2:15), the principle of doing things in God-prescribed manners carries over to us today. We must remember that the Old Testament was written for our admonition and learning (Romans 15:4).

In the New Testament, we find the pattern for the organization of the church: elders, deacons, servants or ministers, and saints or Christians (Philippians 1:1). In God's Word, we find the

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Recently a popular news magazine ran a photograph of a lawyer holding a gun in one hand and a ball-point pen in the other. The caption reads, "Pen yields more illegal cash than gun." The article is about white collar crime, and the point is that more money is stolen by crooked bankers, business managers, and government officials, etc. who "shuffle the books" than by gun slinging bank robbers. In other words, in business, the thief may never actually look like a thief . . . even when put behind bars for the crime.

You know, the devil is like that. We've all been tempted to sin, but none of us have been tempted to do so by a red suited man with horns and a pitchfork. Satan always works in a less than obvious manner.

II Corinthians 11:14 says that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." But don't be misled . . . he's still "a roaring lion going about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

Only when we're conscious of the "wiles of the devil" will we effectively be able to combat him in our lives.

# Five Points To Ponder

Johnny Ramsey

There are several Bible truths that tower above the rest. In fact these extraordinary points sum up

the major areas of Scripture. To overlook these epochal matters will cause us to be unbalanced spiritually. When we get these monumental

landmarks in their proper place we are well on the road to heaven. It is sad to contemplate that millions of people go through life missing out on the majestic themes of godliness. The five points to ponder are these:

God's Sovereignty  
Man's Sinfulness  
Christ's Death  
Our Freedom of Choice  
Responsibility of Christians

When we come to realize that our Creator has sublime and absolute authority we cease to be overly concerned with popularity among mankind. We desire to please our Maker above all else (James 4:4-10) and to rescue the perishing lest their sins overwhelm them and the events at Calvary be in vain. When we use our ability to exercise our volition in heaven's direction we realize the deep responsibility we possess as servants of the Savior.

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,

Pilgrim through this barren land

I am weak but Thou art mighty

Hold me with Thy powerful hand."

Several notable passages definitely stress the omnipotence of the Almighty.

Psalms 66:7 -- He rules by His power forever!

Psalms 93:1 -- He is clothed with majesty.

Psalms 90:1 -- He has always been!

Psalms 24:1 -- The earth belongs to Him.

Romans 13:1 -- There is no real power but His!

Daniel 3:17 -- He is able to deliver us.

Proverbs 3:5 -- We should rely upon Him always.

When we fight against God we shall never prosper (II Chronicles 13:12 and 26:5). Conversely, walking in the glorious light of heaven's sacred counsel guarantees us joyful existence now and abundant life in the world to come (Mark 10:30). A great hymn tells us:

"All the way my Savior leads me

Cheers each winding path I tread

Gives me grace for every trial

Feeds me with the living bread."

Submission to the Father's will is the wisest decision earthly pilgrims could ever make.

Sadly, rebellious hearts continue in sin when grace could abound. Shameful opposition to the Redeemer's plan brings sorrow incapable of full description. The peace that righteous living provides escapes many folk who choose to wallow in the mire of wickedness (John 5:40).

"Souls in danger, look above Jesus completely saves

He will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves."

We are exceedingly unwise to allow the wages of sin to oppress and dominate us when we could be free to enjoy the benefits of salvation through Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24; 6:23). Man's sinfulness drove the Savior to the Cross and our stubborn will crucifies the Son of God afresh (Hebrews 6). In the very shadow of Golgotha every sinner should stand, in deepest gratitude, for the gracious gift of cleansing that flowed from the wounded side of our Lord (Zechariah 13:1).

"All to Jesus, I surrender

Humbly at His feet I bow  
Worldly pleasure all forsaken  
Take me, Jesus, take me now."

Using our freedom of choice (Joshua 24:15) we should rush to the dearest Friend we shall ever know and take a stand for matters divine and eternal. He is our refuge and strength and our help and deliverer as we struggle through this vale of tears and press on to higher ground (Psalms 70:5; Philippians 3:14). We realize our need for heaven's help (Psalms 124:8) and the vanity of pursuing earth's fleeting and shallow treasures. The responsibility of pointing men to God is not a grievous burden but, actually, becomes the quintessence of life for us (John 1:29; Mark 16:15). Let us, therefore, be busily engaged in the glorious work of Jehovah (II Corinthians 6:1) as we march irrevocably toward that final hour. For, after all, our eternal destiny is in the hands of the sovereign God who made the heavens and the earth! Kipling wisely wrote:

"Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,

Lest we forget, lest we forget."

## Is Everything We Do Worship?

Continued From Page 2

Matthew 2:2; Daniel 3:5; John 12:20; Acts 8:27.

2. The Bible makes a clear distinction between worship and service. "Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and SERVE and WORSHIP them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish" (Deuteronomy 8:19).

Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall WORSHIP the Lord your God, and Him only you shall SERVE'" (Matthew 4:10).

"Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and WORSHIPED and SERVED the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever." AMEN" (Romans 1:25).

As Steve Higginbotham suggests, "Service should be viewed as a term that is broader in its scope than worship. For instance, worship is one of the many ways we serve God . . . All worship is service, but not all service is worship."<sup>1</sup>

3. Consider the implications if ALL that we do in life is worship. We then worship by:  
•Working in the garden  
•Brushing our teeth •Playing

golf •Watching television  
•Eating a piece of pie  
•Mowing the lawn •Driving our car  
•Washing our hands  
•Cooking a meal •Shopping for groceries  
•Feeding the dog  
•Reading a book •Spanking a disobedient child  
•Tying our shoes •etc.

Consider:  
•Can you find anywhere in the New Testament where members of the first century church worshiped simply by engaging in the ordinary affairs of life?

•According to the Word of God, do any of the above mentioned endeavors constitute acceptable worship?

Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit (with the right attitude) and truth (with the right action)" (John 4:24). See also Leviticus 10:1-2; Matthew 15:9.

\*(Observe the Lord's Supper - I Corinthians 11:23-29; sing - Ephesians 5:19; give - I Corinthians 16:1-2; pray - Acts 2:42; listen to preaching - Acts 20:7; II Timothy 4:1-2).

<sup>1</sup>Steve Higginbotham, "Are Worship And Service Identical," Biblical Studies, Vol. 2, Sp. 1991.

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## Abel's Hermeneutic

Continued From Page 1

is to be done, we will have God's approval. We will know we have reached the right conclusion.

Do you think Abel should have encouraged Cain to adopt the same kind of hermeneutic? Would he really exercise the concern he should if he did not try to encourage Cain to do the same? I think all of us know the answer.

Cain was left without excuse in the matter of interpretation, for he had the example of Abel, and so do we. We have an account of Abel's hermeneutic that will show us how to reach the right conclusions, unify the people of God, and insure God's endorsement. You can't ask for more than this.

--1602 W. Hobbs St., Athens, AL 35611.

## We Need To Stay With The Pattern!

Continued From Page 3

pattern for worship that the early church used and which is still useful and binding on us today - Singing (Colossians 3:16), The Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-29), Prayer (I Timothy 2:1, 2), Preaching (Acts 20:7), and Giving (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

The pattern found in the New Testament for a person to become a Christian is just as relevant and necessary today as it was in the first century. One must hear and believe the gospel (Romans 10:17). He must be willing to repent of his sins (Luke 13:3). He must

be willing to confess his faith in Jesus as the Son of God (Romans 10:9, 10); and he must be immersed into water for the forgiveness of sins (I Peter 3:21). If one will hold true to the teachings of God, trying not to add to or take away from His word (Galatians 1:6-9), then he can have the assurance of living with God one day in that home of heaven (Titus 1:2).

May we hold to the pattern that God has set for us. "Trust and obey -- for there's no other way -- to be happy in Jesus -- but to trust and obey."

March 4, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- What About Hell?
- The Kingdom
- Overprivileged Young People May Have Difficulty Finding Themselves!
- An Abused Passage
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Controlling Worry

Volume 30 Number 10  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak  
Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 2

## Christians Only

Alan E. Highers

There is no plea more thrilling and meaningful in religious thought than the call to be Christians only -- unsectarian, undenominational, unbranded members of the church revealed in the New Testament.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter proclaimed the gospel, exalted the resurrected Lord, and announced the conditions of salvation to the assembled multitude. He admonished them to repent and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Three thousand souls gladly heard the word and were baptized (Acts 2:14-47).

Although they were obedient to the gospel, received the remission or forgiveness of their sins, and were added to the church, they did not become members of any denomination, sect, or religious party. They were just Christians, Christians only, if you will, "only this and nothing more."

This was the plea of the pioneer preachers of the gospel in this country. There was an urgent effort to call men out of denominationalism with its human creeds, sectarian names, and party spirit, and to persuade them to be purely and simply Christians. It was acknowledged by brethren, and, so far as I know, has always been acknowledged, that some Christians could be

affiliated with the denominations. There are some individuals who have heard, believed, and obeyed the truth, and have been added to the church about which we read in the New Testament, but who have later been influenced by spouse, family, or other causes to join a denomination. There are other instances where people have read, studied, and learned what to do to be saved, and have done what the three thousand did at Pentecost, but have thereafter affiliated with denominationalism. Many of these have not understood that one could be a Christian, a member of the church of the Lord, without belonging to any sect or denomination at all.

It was to these individuals that our brethren made an especially fervent plea, a clear call to come forth from denominationalism and to be Christians only; to forsake human creeds and sectarian names, and to be only what children of God were in the first century; to lay down the badges of sectarianism and religious division and to unite upon the divine name and the inspired word, but it was never stated, suggested, or even hinted that it was acceptable for them to remain where they were, continue as they were, and to be what they were.

It was within this context which I have described that brethren have declared, "We

are not the only Christians, but we are Christians only." It is important, in fact, it is crucial to an understanding of this principle for us to define who is meant by "we." If we are referring to the New Testament church as such, one cannot scripturally say, "We are not the only Christians," for as we have seen from a previous study, all Christians are in the church, and it is neither smug, self-righteous, nor arrogant for us to say so. But, it is clear from an examination of the context that, in making the foregoing statement, brethren utilized "we" to refer to all Christians who were undenominational and unsectarian.

On May 5, 1917, G. C. Brewer preached a sermon at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on the theme, "Are We a Denomination?" He immediately recognized the need to define the terms of his address and asked as a main heading in his lesson, "Who are we?" In answering he replied: "No, we do not mean to include all Christians in the 'we' -- if there are Christians in the denominations, we do not include them for we are speaking of Christians who are not in a denomination -- Christians who do not compose a denomination." Let it, therefore, be clearly understood: When our brethren have stated that "we" are not the only Christians but that "we" are Christians only, the word we was not a

reference to the New Testament church, but rather it was a reference to those Christians who have never affiliated with denominationalism. Thus: "We (Christians who are undenominational) are not the only Christians, but we are Christians only (in that we claim to be nothing more)." Therefore, it is not ugly, hateful, or sectarian, as has been suggested, to say that we, as members of the New Testament church, are the only Christians; for all the saved are in the church.

The brethren who proclaimed these principles in times past understood them; in the hands of neophytes, a little learning may, indeed, be a dangerous thing. Consider the powerful declarations of N. B. Hardeman:

"I do not claim, and have never so done, that those who have taken a stand with denominations are the only Christians upon the earth; but here is the contention: Having simply believed and obeyed the gospel, we propose to be Christians only and that we claim to be the only Christians. The Bible clearly predicts that the Lord's people, some of them, will be engaged in a state of confusion; and the Lord bids his people to come out of that state and just stand, if you please, as humble Christians only.

"The confusion of the twentieth century is denominationalism. There is no doubt about that."

(Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, Vol. II, page 253).

The statement of Hardeman is beautifully consistent with that made by Brewer, and both are entirely consistent with New Testament teaching. It is manifest in the statements both of G. C. Brewer and of N. B. Hardeman that the "we" under consideration refers to "those who have taken no stand with denominations." It is significant that while brother Hardeman recognized that there may be Christians in the denominations, he regarded such as "a state of confusion," and not as a state of "sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among all the various denominations." The former has been uniformly acknowledged among our brethren, the latter is an innovation and a corruption of the truth.

F. D. Srygley, an early editor of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, was once asked if there were Christians in the denominations, He replied: "When there are Christians -- not the best variety of Christians, to be sure, but the same sort that lengthen the lists of members of all 'our church books' -- in saloons, on the race track, at the theater, in the ballroom, around the gambling tables, in the calaboose, behind the jail doors, in the penitentiary, and on the gallows, it should not

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## What About Hell?

Glenn Colley

A recent article in the religious section of the Birmingham News was about hell. Though not a pleasant subject, it is obvious that people have a large variety of opinions about the pit called hell. Here are some quotes from the article:

*But damnation isn't what it used to be. Hell doesn't play well in growth-conscious churches or among feel-good baby boomers. "It is more of an absolute idea than baby boomers are comfortable with," said Robert Wuthnow, a sociologist at Princeton University. "We like to believe in the second and third and fourth chance."*

*These days, even fundamental churches that believe in eternal punishment in a physical hell play down the concept. "The thought of hell does not seem to motivate people to either serve God or accept Christ as their savior," says Bruce Kelpp. . .*

*E. Von Clemans, associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale . . . embraces the current psychological notion of hell as a separation from God. Salvation is peace of mind, even positive thinking. Damnation is fears, depressions, doubts, feeling bad about yourself.*

*"In a sense," he says, "it is eternal. God does not overrule our decision to reject Him. But it is not without hope because God is always waiting and anxious for us to accept His love and grace, and I think*

*that offer extends into the after life."*

*Moslems disagree on whether hell is a location or a state of mind, but they agree on its temporary nature. "God's mercy is so comprehensive that it overcomes His anger, which means that people will be saved by divine mercy and end up in heaven," says Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, professor of Islamic studies at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut.*

*Orthodox Jews believe all souls go to hell, but not for more than a year, according to Rabbi Solomon Schiff.*

Perhaps it is note worthy that throughout the lengthy article there was not one scripture reference offered.

Consider some Bible references on the subject of hell and damnation, and what they plainly teach:

### 1. II Thessalonians 1:7-9

A. When the Lord returns He will take vengeance on them that know not God, and those who have not obeyed the Gospel.

B. Those miserable souls will be punished with everlasting destruction.

C. Those souls will be forever away from God's presence and His glory.

### 2. Matthew 25:31-46

A. When Jesus returns, He will separate people into two different groups. On His right hand will be the saved. On His left will be the lost.

B. To the lost He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

C. The punishment will be "everlasting."

There are other passages to consider, (Luke 16, John 5:28, etc.), but these make some powerful points.

Now raise with me an important question: Is teaching on hell inappropriate for our day? Be careful how you answer. Consider first Jude 22, 23: "And of some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire . . ." This statement is given in the form of instruction. Religious teachers who fail to teach about hell and motivate people with it's fearful images, are in violation of this passage.

We do not believe that the subject of hell should be fed as a steady spiritual diet to the neglect of other important Bible themes and motivations. It is important, however, to tell people the truth about damnation. They have the right to know. How much better for people living in sin to "see" hell now through their mind's eye while listening to a sermon, than to see it for the first time when entering the tormenting home of the Prince of darkness. We must love the sinner enough to do all we can to keep him from hell. It is torment. It is eternal.

No wonder the Hebrew writer penned, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

# The Kingdom

Justin Brasfield

*Editor's note: The following article is by one of our younger members at 6th Avenue in Jasper. Justin Brasfield is 13, and already a fine and talented writer. His friend and tutor is brother Richard Mauldin.*

*We want to applaud all of our outstanding youth who want to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:18).*

To go about our Father's Business in His Kingdom we must first know what His Kingdom is. Daniel 2:44 says "In the days of those kings, (Romans), 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 into pieces and consume all these other kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This says the Kingdom will be set up in the days of the Caesars of the Roman Empire. This is also the time in which Christ established His Church.

Our Lord's Kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom. It is made up of the souls of Christians that have obeyed the gospel, which was the last will of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This brings us to the thought of His cruel crucifixion and death. Did He die for the church, or the kingdom, or both (making them the same thing)?

"Giving thanks unto the Father always which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the

saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Colossians 1:12-14. If we are translated into the kingdom by the blood of Christ, and as Luke stated in Acts 20:28, "feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood," then the Kingdom and the Church are the same thing, for Jesus died only once. To determine how we should act in this kingdom we should pattern our lives after it's founder and ruler Jesus Christ. He is the King of His Kingdom. If we know the behavior, the attitude, and the life of the King, we will know how to go about our Father's business in His Kingdom.

Our King did not live the rich (in money) and proud life of a worldly king and did not live in a palace. He was born in a manger because there was not room in the inn. He didn't have a velvet bed and a crown of jewels.

The eyes of our King were full of compassion. In Luke 7:13 it says, "And when he saw her he had compassion on her, and said weep not." His eyes were of great wisdom.

The hands of our King did not wear rings of gold and silver and touch finery, but they were hands of service as shown when he washed the disciples feet, John 13:5. They were the hands of healing,

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# Overprivileged Young People May Have Difficulty Finding Themselves!

## Basil Overton

Some young people are underprivileged. Many are overprivileged; especially in the United States where there is much affluence and prosperity.

We should not assume that all overprivileged children are adversely effected by their abundance of material things, but being overprivileged may create more problems than being underprivileged.

Young people being overprivileged might be a severe form of child abuse!

There is grave danger in the overabundance of material things, ease and recreation of our time. None of these is wrong in itself, but an overabundance causes, in some, wrestlessness, dissatisfaction and craving for more and more material things in order to have fulfillment and happiness. This may be one of the causes of the appalling level of teenage suicides in our country.

It is evident that many have become victims of an overprivileged society. Whether young or old, they need sympathy, but they need to listen to wise instruction and reasonable lessons of life too!

Apparently, life for some overprivileged young people seems to them to be dull and boring and unchallenging. This may be one of the causes of some of them making the horrible mistake of using illegal drugs. Their upbringing may cause them not to accept responsibility.

I realize society has changed in many ways since I was young. Some changes are good and some are bad. In our affluent and very permissive society there is reason to have fear, sorrow, and sympathy for young people, especially the overprivileged.

Godless humanism and other unholy influences have wrought many very unfortunate changes since my youth. In the days of my youth we heard nothing about people being on drugs except

occasionally when we heard of some doctor who had "got on dope," but I did not understand very well what that meant.

In those days there were very few divorces where I lived. Divorce was frowned upon. I cannot remember hearing about homosexuality in those days. Now it is so rampant, that it, with AIDS, poses a grave threat to our great country. God condemns homosexuality in the Bible!

I cannot remember hearing about abortion in my childhood. Now, in the United States alone, where only six percent of the world's population lives, there are about one and one half million babies killed each year in the process we call abortion!

## Trying To Find Themselves

In recent years I have heard several times about young people saying they were trying to "find themselves." I am not sure I understand what they mean by this. When I was growing up in rural Weakley County, Tennessee during the Great Depression, I never heard of anyone who talked about finding himself. Even though I am not sure of what is meant by those who say they are trying to find themselves, there was a sense in which we found ourselves when I was growing up and we had no difficulty doing it. Life was rigorous, and there were very few dull moments!

In those days I found myself walking to a country school with my books on my back and my lunch in a sack in cold and hot weather through mud and dust and ice and snow.

I found myself holding one handle of a crosscut saw with a brother, or my Daddy, holding the other handle, as we cut wood for stoves and fireplaces. There were no power chain saws then. Many times it was so cold when we cut wood that it seemed our hands and feet would freeze.

I found myself at one end of an axe, or a hoe, or a briar blade, or a pitchfork. I found

myself holding the handles of a turning plow as mules pulled it. I remember well the place by our old corn crib where my Daddy first gave me that responsibility when I was nine years old. He gave me confidence and assurance; he told me I could handle that job, and I did it!

I found myself pulling a long sack of cotton, sometimes through the mud, as I picked cotton when there was some talk that a cotton picker would be invented. We hoped this would happen soon.

I found myself "gathering corn" and throwing it into the same wagon in which we did our traveling to the small town where we bought our commodities, and in which we traveled to see relatives and friends.

I found myself picking beans, and pepper and okra and strawberries, and digging potatoes and harvesting hay. I remember picking strawberries away from home and being paid two cents for each quart I picked. It was a "low down" job and hard on the back and knees!

I found myself working with a wheat thrasher and digging fence post holes, and digging with a fork and putting in a wagon, barnyard waste, and hauling and scattering it with that fork in the fields to enrich the soil when people could not afford to buy commercial fertilizer. I recall when working away from home on such jobs I received ten cents an hour!

I also found myself sitting on the bank of the Obion River holding a fishing pole. I found myself with a ball bat in my hands, even if it was a piece of a board or a stick. Our recreational activities had to be the kind that cost very little money.

We had no electricity and no bath room and no car. My parents never had electricity until after I was grown and gone from home. I was nearly sixteen when my Daddy bought our first car. It was

about twelve years old and he gave sixty dollars for it.

In those days I found myself in Sunday School classes and occasionally hearing gospel preachers tell the story of Jesus. There was very little preaching except in series of gospel meetings in the summer time. I found myself listening every time I could to gospel preachers. I learned to love the Lord and his word very much. I could imagine seeing my blessed Savior as those preachers told about him. My faith grew and I put my trust in him and put him on in baptism (Galatians 3:27) and became a Christian, a

member of the body which is his church, when I was nearly sixteen. In the forty-seven years since then I have not regretted that I did this even one second!

As one wise man said, "If you want to keep a young man's feet on the ground, put responsibility on his shoulders." Parents, let's remember to help our children "find" themselves in honest hard work, a clear sense of right from wrong, and an unquestioned dedication to the Christ.

--P.O. Box 2279, Florence, AL 35630.

## An Abused Passage

### Bobby Duncan

*Editor's note: Bobby Duncan is the editor of Vigil, an excellent brotherhood publication originating in Adamsville, Alabama. He is also the author of this interesting and needed article. I want to recommend it to our readers.*

In tempting the Lord, the devil quoted from Psalms 91:11-12. Needless to say, he was misusing the passage in an effort to get the Lord to do that which is wrong. Any time

Bible verses are referred to in an effort to sustain error, those verses are being either misquoted or misapplied. In this case the devil was misapplying the verses he quoted; he was trying to make them mean something they did not mean at all.

Many passages are properly quoted, and then misapplied. Among them is one that is referred to very often by those who wish the teaching of error

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**Picture a beautiful wedding. Everything is perfect. The grey tuxes, the pastel dresses, the candles, the flowers, the preacher, even the sweet children do their parts flawlessly. The newly-wed husband and wife stand smiling at the front of a receiving line awaiting the congratulations of friends. And the friends come - only, there's a problem. The folks offer love and hugs and well wishes to the groom, and simply ignore the bride! Now, we both know that any groom, not to mention his bride, would be hurt and upset by this.**

**Sometimes people believe they can love and please Jesus without having anything to do with His church. Did you know that Christ's church, according to Ephesians 5 of the Bible, is Christ's bride? Let's dedicate ourselves to love the things that Jesus loves.**

# An Abused Passage

Continued From Page 3

could go unchallenged and unrefuted. I refer to Matthew 18:15-17: "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."

There may be times when it is possible to call aside one who is teaching error, and help him learn the truth privately, and then allow him to correct the error he has taught. Perhaps that is what Aquila and Priscilla had in mind when they took Apollos unto them and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). But as it turned out, there were at least some in Ephesus who had been taught error by Apollos who never knew it was error until Paul finally came to that city (Acts 19:1-5). Had Apollos been corrected publicly instead of privately, perhaps these would not have continued in their error.

Be that as it may, Matthew 18:15-17 cannot be properly used to show that we err if we publicly refute error that has been publicly taught. The idea of some is that a false teacher can publish his error in books and magazines that are read all across the country, but the teacher of truth cannot expose or refute that error publicly until he first goes personally to the false teacher in an effort to get him to repent.

The passage under consideration embraces private trespasses: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee . . ." Certainly it is a violation of this passage as well as a violation of the Golden Rule for one unnecessarily to make public a private trespass until every other means of bringing about repentance has been exhausted. But in the event error has been taught publicly there needs to be a refutation of that error, even if the teacher of error does repent. People who have been taught error should not be shielded from the teaching of truth to correct that error. Else, like the men at Ephesus (Acts 19), they may continue in that error.

Many years ago I heard the

late beloved brother Gus Nichols use an illustration to make this point clear. I have since heard others use it. Brother Nichols said that if students in a mathematics class were working problems individually at their desks, and the teacher should notice an error on one student's paper, the teacher might whisper to that student privately and get him to correct his error. But if that same student were working at the chalkboard in front of the whole class, and made an error, it would become necessary for the teacher to correct that error in the presence of the whole class. Else the whole class might think the student had worked the problem correctly.

So it is with the difference between error held privately and error taught publicly. If one is in error, but has not taught that error publicly, then a private approach might enable him to make whatever correction is necessary. But if error has been taught publicly, there needs to be a public correction of that error. Matthew 18:15-17 does not

teach otherwise.

Remember the admonition of Paul in I Corinthians 16:13-14: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity."

--4207 Adamsville Parkway, Adamsville, AL 35505.

## Controlling Worry

**You can't control the length of your life --**

**but you can control its width and depth.**

**You can't control the contour of your face --**

**but you can control its expression.**

**Why worry about things you can't control when you can keep yourself busy controlling the things that depend on you ?**

## The Kingdom

Continued From Page 2

Matthew 8:3, "And Jesus put forth his hand touching him, saying I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." His hands were also of sacrifice, for in Matthew 27:31, he was crucified.

His mouth was not of self adoration; it did not order slaves, or command earthly armies. In Matthew 11:2, 29 He pleads for us, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It would utter terms of salvation, "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3.

In John 18:36 He would say "My Kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." The next verse (37) is a scriptural example of Jesus' humility, his meekness, and his lowliness. In this verse Pilate asked, "Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I bear witness unto the truth."

Jesus, in this sense (among all others), showed His great wisdom and courage through humility. Imagine that you were the King of kings and Lord of lords! Imagine that you had the power to call legions of angels at your fingertips! Jesus had these things, and much, much more. He is the Son of God. Yet, He is supremely humble and

lowly. When comparing our power, our abilities, our being to His, we find that His is infinitely greater. In addition, and as important, when comparing our pride, our boastings, to His, we find that His is infinitesimal. Yet, He had so much about which He could boast.

Jesus' feet did not walk on palace floors or in royal mansions, but walked to a place called Gethsemane, walked on water, walked up the hill of Golgotha, and were pierced with Roman spikes. He suffered and died for us that we might have eternal life, if we follow in his foot steps.

Our King wore a crown of thorns that we might have eternal life. He was buried in a tomb, as we must be buried in baptism. He arose from the grave as we can arise from baptism to newness of life.

Jesus paved the road of heaven for us. Some day the King shall say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth," (Matthew 25:34).

Don't you want to go to that kingdom some day, that heavenly kingdom? Christ has no way to expand his kingdom but through you and me. We must let our hands be His hands, our feet be His feet, our mouth be His mouth, our heart be His heart. When we are with our friends, or our peers, we must not be ashamed of our Lord. When we're at school or with the baseball team we must not be ashamed of our Jesus, because if we are, we will never make it to that heavenly kingdom.

## Christians Only

Continued From Page 1

create surprise or start a scandal if a few of the meanest specimens of them should occasionally be found temporarily in the most respectable and pious religious denominations of this degenerate age and God-forsaken country."

Srygley, so far as I know, however, never went so far as to suggest that sincere, knowledgeable, and devout Christians would be found in all the saloons, jails, and penitentiaries of his day. In fact, he plainly stated, "If there are Christians 'in all denominations,' or in any denomination, they ought not to be there, and the sooner they get out, the better." I

agree with Srygley.

It is regrettable that we have not continued to emphasize these principles with the same fervor as our brethren of an earlier day, and, more regrettable still, that we have permitted the plea to be renewed by some whose comprehension of it appears to be woefully deficient. I am still convinced, however, that the plea to be Christians only, properly understood and properly presented, which I have heard and believed since my teen years, is the most exciting and needed message which we can deliver to this strife-torn and sin-weary world.

March 11, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Christian Colleges And False Teachers
- Teaching Them To Observe All Things
- Striving Against Sin
- What Wise Followers Find
- Must We Change Or Die?
  - 'Most Of A Minute'
- 'Is Jesus Coming Soon?'
- AIDS, Anguish And The Right Answer

Volume 30 Number 11  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words C Truth

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

## Christ Is The Head Of The Church, His Body

**Elwood Holt**

In Colossians 1:18, Christ is spoken of as supreme, and he is supreme. The members of the Church are represented as branches of a living vine. He is the good shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep. The church is spoken of as a kingdom. He is the king who reigns over that kingdom. The church is represented under the figure of a body. He is the head of that body in all things. Therefore, He should have the preeminence in our lives! There are other scriptures in which Christ is represented as the head of the church. To the Corinthians Paul writes, "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ" (I Corinthians 11:3). To the church of Ephesus, he wrote "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). Again he wrote, God "hath given him to be head over all things to the church, which is his Body" (Ephesians 1:22). According to this order, we are to notice the character of Him who is the head of the church. The dignity of His divine character is clearly indicated by the works which are ascribed to Him. In the context it is said, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions or principalities, or powers; all things are created by Him and

for Him" (verse 16). Again, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:13). Surely no power short of the power of God could perform such stupendous works. Indeed, finite minds cannot comprehend this mighty creation; how then could a finite mind contrive it, or a finite hand execute it? Contemplate, gentle reader, the vastness of creation. What a world is this which we inhabit with all its mighty mountains, its roaring and muttering volcanoes, ever and anon belching forth rolling torrents of lava! Behold its wide spread plains, its deep rolling rivers, and its mighty oceans, whose mountainous waves roll, ever lashing the shore at the feet of the awe-stricken beholder. Then contemplate the innumerable tribes of living beings, formed to inhabit every part part of this mighty world of ours; the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea. But, above all, contemplate man, made in the image of God, and then remember that ALL were created by Him who is the head of the church. Then we may form some very faint idea of His glorious character.

Our little world is but a speck in creation, as but a grain of sand on the sea-shore, compared with the immensity of the created universe. The sun, moon, and the stars are

the works of His fingers. He "in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of His hands" (Hebrews 1:10). Imagine every fixed star -- even those that can only be seen by the aid of our largest and most powerful telescopes -- to be a sun, placed in the center of a system of worlds, all performing their annual revolutions around their respective suns. Then imagine all these worlds, with their innumerable hosts of living inhabitants, to be a very small portion of the workmanship of His almighty power. Think then how glorious must He be who is the head of the Church and the Savior of the body.

Paul says, "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (verse 17). The apostle says, "God hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, and is the express image of His Person, and UPHOLDING ALL THINGS by the word of His power," etc (Hebrews 1:1, 2, 3). The apostle here seems to represent the power of Christ as a mighty arch, reaching from eternity past to eternity to come, or spanning that broken off fragment of eternity which we call time, upon which arch is suspended the universe, all born up or upheld by Him "whom God hath given to be head over all things to the Church." Surely

He is not simply a super-human or a super-angelic being. He who created all things, and who upholds all things, must be divine. The very term which expresses divine nature, is applied to JESUS, the CHRIST.

John says, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God." And the

WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of GRACE and TRUTH" (John 1:1-14). This JESUS THE CHRIST is the one who loved us so much HE DIED FOR US. This JESUS IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL WHO WILL ACCEPT HIM.

## The Real Dangers

**Author Unknown**

Homosexuality is not what threatens the fabric of society. It has been with us for thousands of years. When homosexuality is considered normal, not wrong, an alternative lifestyle, society is threatened. Divorce is not the great threat to our country and the church. It has been with us almost from the beginning also. But when there is no stigma, when divorce is acceptable, the first option rather than the last resort, we are in trouble. Fornication or promiscuity does not threaten us. This sin is as old as mankind. Yet when fornicators become our role

models, our heroes, we need to ask ourselves in what direction we are going. Unscriptural teachings or bad attitudes will not destroy the church. The church has been surviving these problems since her inception. But when those who are loose with the Scriptures become our ideals, and those who have bad attitudes are our defenders of the faith, then we had better take inventory of the future of the church.

In short, sin is not going to destroy us. Sin has been with us since Adam and Eve. When we no longer think of sin as sin, God's patience may run out.

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# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Christian Colleges And False Teachers

Glenn Colley  
Are Christian colleges (that is, those run primarily by Christians) at liberty to provide liberal teachers of false doctrines a platform from which to speak? So often those of us who read and hear the proponents of digression, and are grieved at their handiwork, soon find their names on advertisement flyers as speakers for our colleges.

It is argued, "But the college IS NOT the church!", implying therefore that they are not responsible to the same restrictions or requirements as is the church. Certainly a college is not the church, but that does not relieve the administrators of their

accountability for who and what they promote!

What folks may fail to realize is that we are responsible to uphold the sound teaching of God's word *regardless* of our vocation or position (Titus 2:1; Romans 12:1, 2; Jude 3). That's a personal responsibility whether I am a merchant, or a carpenter, or a lawyer, or a school administrator. Quite dangerous is the weak but calming argument that "We bring a wide array of ideas and thoughts to our campus," or, "We try to get a feel from all over the country for who people want to hear," when in reality what is happening is that a false teacher is being

invited to promote his soul-jeopardizing doctrines unchallenged! The fact that I may work for an institution of higher learning does not license me to support false teaching or teachers by my words or actions.

What a precious trust parents exhibit when they send their son or daughter to a Christian college. They know well that these two or four years are extremely critical in determining the direction their child will go in life. Those who teach and direct those schools have a heavy responsibility, placed on them not only by parents and patrons, but by God, and must not fail to offer uncompromised truth to those students.

## Teaching Them To Observe All Things

Jim Waldron

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, most of us in the western world had very little understanding of the people in the former Soviet Union. Under communist rule many of them risked their jobs and lives to be "baptized" into the Russian Orthodox Church. A general religious nature of the people has meant an open door, which has resulted in the large number of baptisms we hear about when our brethren go there. Going, teaching and baptizing are urgent needs to fulfill the great commission. For the Lord Jesus said, "all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20). Yet, sad

to say, the fourth part of the great commission is being woefully neglected. That is, there is a general failure to train new Christians. The general method of converting people in Russia or the Ukraine is for 2 to 8 brethren to go there for two to three weeks, hold classes or gospel meetings, baptize a large group of people and then leave. It is happening over and over again. Brethren go, come back and say we baptized 40, 50 or a 100, and when asked who is there with the new Christians the answer is - "we are looking for a man to go." Such is the equivalent of bringing a newborn home from the hospital, leaving him on the doorstep and saying, "root hog or die, boy." These new converts have very little knowledge as to the need to attend regularly and virtually no experience at such. Recently a group of campaigners came from the states to work in a city south of Kiev. They had been told 70 people had been baptized

there in the last two years. The brethren were able to find and restore seven of them. In 1992 we were informed of some 26 persons being baptized the previous year, left to carry on worship by themselves and eventually going over to the Mormons. Why? Because the Mormons were there. They now report having two hundred "elders" in Kiev alone.

If no one is going to stay with new converts until they can be taught "to observe all things" then the fourth part of the great commission has been overlooked or ignored. Elders surely need to ask some sobering questions of those preachers or singing groups who want money to make these little two or three week excursions, like: "which ones of you are going to stay with the new Christians until they are able to stand on their own?"

--Jim Waldron is presently doing mission work in Kiev, Ukraine.

# Striving Against Sin

Johnny Ramsey

Perhaps the best four-step decline in spirituality is set forth in Jeremiah 7:24: "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walking in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward."

When men quit fighting against sin they have surrendered to the Captain of Hell. Far too many have waved the white flag before they even buckled on the sword. Why do we give up so easily?

One major reason that sin gains momentum is the startling fact that there is pleasure in sin. For a carnally minded individual it is far more appealing to associate with evil companions than with the saints in light. The bitter dregs of shame compel a sinner more than the pure waters of life. The devil will always see to it that leaving error is most inconvenient. As Byron stated in Don Juan: "Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure."

There are scores of folk who get their only pleasure in doing evil and this fully satisfies their worldly view of life. The tragedy is that they will continue without aim or purpose unless Christians begin anew to strive against sin!

Another contributing factor to the sinful predicament by which millions are captivated is

the cunning progressiveness of sin. David, Demas and Diotrephes did not begin in the clutches of Satanic influences; but before they realized it adultery, spiritual infidelity and arrogance had enraptured them! What a contrasting view springs from the lives of Joseph, Joshua and Jesus. These three fled from sin, purged it from the camp and gained the victory over it. Our Lord finally sounded the death knell over the prostrate form of sin in His triumphant death.

Too many well-intentioned people cultivate sinful attitudes and allow pettiness to overwhelm them. We do make provision for the flesh!

If Ephesians 5:11 and I Thessalonians 5:22 were obeyed there could be no major problem in our lives. These verses tell us to have no fellowship with evil, abstain from it and rebuke it. Indeed, "let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The sin of compromise has led to complete departure from the Lord for convenience is the mother of apostasy. Unless we resist the Devil he will not flee from us.

Is it not a challenging, heart-warming promise that God provides a way of escape for us when temptation strikes? In I Corinthians 10, Paul, by inspiration, tells us of the

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# What Wise Followers Find

(Proverbs 21:21)

## Neal Pollard

A motorist encountered a road sign, which read, "Select your ruts carefully, for you will have to drive in them the next twenty miles (Bradfield's Sermon Outlines, 88). All of us decide to follow a certain track in life. We cut a certain path with the choices we make. Whether good or bad, those decisions affect what kind of life we will live. As the apostle Paul admonished,

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 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 6:7-8).

Paul's words are so logical! Why do so many follow the wrong path and the wrong guides? Why is spiritual stability so difficult for some? How can individuals repeat the same mistakes over and over?

Those who follow cult leaders often live the most miserable lives and die the most horrible deaths at the behest of those corrupt leaders. Good, religious people, who follow the teaching and traditions of men, violate God's word and keep themselves estranged from salvation. So many follow the Pied Piper of the world, the Evil Enticer, and the deluding Devil. Pleasure is their pilot. But, not all have bowed their knees to the Baals of atheism, denominationalism, materialism, and hedonism.

Many choose a path which is paved by righteousness and mercy. The world has many individuals who fully embrace the Bible when it is presented to them and comply with the plan of salvation. These are among the wise followers mentioned by the writer of Proverbs 21:21.

"He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour."

## Wise Followers Find Life.

Those who find Christ and His church find everlasting life (cf. Romans 6:4; 16:16). These are fed by the bread of life (John 6:35), who satiates their spiritual hunger. Those who faithfully follow the giver of life will, in eternity, eat from the tree of life (Revelation 2:7), wear a crown of eternal life

(Revelation 2:10), and have access to the water of life (Revelation 22:1)!

## Wise Followers Find Righteousness.

Jesus promises that those who hunger and thirst after it will be filled (Matthew 5:6). Such is a fruit of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:9). Christ is the great King of righteousness (Hebrews 6:20 - 7:1-2), and

"if ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (I John 2:29).

## Wise Followers Find Honour.

The promise of Christ is, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour (John

12:26).

Honor comes in service, humility, and obedience. So comes wisdom.

The foolish follow a wide and comfortable road, a non-sacrificial and a self-indulgent, self-satisfying path. The wise follow a narrow road, a demanding and self-denying street. The blessings go to the wise!

## Must We Change Or Die?

### Al Brown

Try as they may to conceal it, the infidelity of liberalism betrays itself in many ways. Some today insist that they believe the Bible is inspired, but their concept of inspiration is not even close to the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. The claim that the church must change or it will die is one of many clues disclosing their lack of trust in the agelessness of God's revealed wisdom.

If the Bible were the product of mere men, such a contention would be valid. Man's wisdom is so limited he is incapable of developing guidelines for living which are apropos to every culture of every age through all time. Indeed, he can't devise a perfect pattern for living for even one generation. The combined efforts of all the social scientists in his last decade of the twentieth century can't even produce a consensus of how life ought to be lived.

Man's best insights, which have been incorporated into religious creeds and social mores over the last fifty years, are seriously flawed and have spawned chaos in American society. We are reaping the harvest of this atheistic humanism in the grim statistics blasted across the media every day. Crime is covering us up and the courts are helpless. People are arming themselves because they think the law enforcement agencies can no longer protect them. Drugs are

everywhere. Sexual license is rampant. It is difficult to find an adult who has not been divorced at least once. Children are abused, misused, abandoned, and murdered by the millions each year. The prisons are full. Teen-age hoodlums terrorize whole neighborhoods. If righteousness exalts a nation and sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34), America's shame defies description. This deplorable situation is the fruit of situation ethics embedded in every facet of life, from religion to business to politics, and we are left with bankrupt social and moral conscience.

America's religious denominations have changed. They have totally abandoned what little of true Christianity they at one time embraced. They never did submit to the authority of Christ's teaching, but now they openly hold the moral standard of Christianity in contempt, and consider all New Testament teaching as only the wisdom of men.

Since all human efforts require periodic revision, people who believe the Bible is the handiwork of men naturally think it too is subject to imperfections and must also be updated at times. This is precisely the attitude the liberal holds. These infidels may claim the thoughts or ideas of the Bible are inspired, but the very words are not; hence, they insist the Bible contains the word of God, but the words used in the original autographs are not the very

words the Holy Spirit of God moved those men to write.

Naturally, those who think the Bible was devised by man hold the authority claimed in the Bible in contempt. If the scriptures are only the sentiments of opinionated, chauvinistic men who lived 2,000 or more years ago, why should we be bound by the out-moded taboos of an ancient culture? Such an ethic may have sufficed for that

day, but, they insist, it is totally inadequate for our sophisticated, complex society.

In contrast to this infidelity, we believe the claims the Bible makes -- that it is, in fact, the product of God's infinite wisdom, knowledge, and power. Man is incapable of producing a perfect set of rules by which every one in

Continued On Page 4

**Upcoming  
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## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**Hear the legend of frontiersman Mike Fink. Boasting himself the finest rifle marksman, he enjoyed dangerous competitions. One was to shoot a tin can from off the head of a friend and let the friend do the same. One man, named Carpenter, in shooting a can from Fink's head grazed his scalp. Fink became so enraged that when his turn came, he shot his friend through the forehead. Later, the dead man's friend murdered Fink.**

**You know, people often get involved today with dabbling in wrong activities, thinking all along that they can keep control and get out whenever they please. Take drinking beverage alcohol for instance. Have you seen the bumper stickers which read, "My son was killed by a drunk driver?" How many lives have been destroyed? How many families broken up? Proverbs 20:1 says, "Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."**

# "Is Jesus Coming Soon?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"Do you think Jesus is coming soon?"

I have no way of knowing the answer to your question. The Bible says:

1. "But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the

angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32).

•What did Jesus say about the day and hour of His return?

•According to this verse, do the angels know when Jesus

will return?

•Does Jesus know when he will return?

•According to this verse, Who knows when Jesus will return?

2. "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the

Lord so comes as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:2). See also II Peter 3:10.

•According to this verse, what did Paul say about the day of the Lord?

•Does a thief announce his arrival?

•Does a thief announce the hour and date of his coming?

3. "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him" (Matthew 24:44).

•What does this passage

reveal about the Lord's return?

•According to this verse, what do we know about the time of the Son of Man's coming?

•While the above mentioned verses do not reveal the TIME of the Lord's return, they do serve to remind us that HE IS, IN FACT, COMING.

•When should we start preparing for this occasion? II Peter 3:11-12; II Corinthians 6:2.

--Adairsville, GA 30103.

## Must We Change Or Die?

Continued From Page 3

every culture, in every age can live; but God, in his infinite wisdom and knowledge can -- and he has. This is why Jesus said that heaven and earth would pass away, but His word would not (Matthew 24:35). Because it is the fruit of the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God, it cannot be improved upon. To insist it needs revision, or should be supplanted, is to deny that God's knowledge and wisdom is infinite. Such a belief is blasphemy. It is a rejection of the God of the Bible (Luke 10:16; I Thessalonians 4:8). One who holds such a view is

an infidel (an unbeliever) to the religion of Jesus Christ!

These infidels insist they only want to cleanse the church of obsolete, useless traditions. This sounds innocent on the surface -- even commendable. After all, who would want to be bound by unneeded, worn-out practices which actually hinder the cause of Christ? Some traditions may need to be abandoned, or at least modified. However, a close look at what they are calling "tradition," reveals they are not talking about traditional methods we have used to do

the Lord's will over the years. By "tradition," they mean the facts, commands, and patterns for practicing Christianity given in the Scriptures. They want to revise and/or abandon the teaching (doctrine) of the New Testament!

They do not believe New Testament doctrine has any permanence but is on the same level with the doctrines of men. Since men must revise, alter, or abandon their teaching to fit the constantly shifting moral or social climate, these infidels think God's eternal word should be subject to the same criteria. They see the church of our Lord as one denomination among many and no better than any. It may even be worse; at least, that is the way their vicious, hateful criticism sounds. This is why they are insisting the church must change or it will die.

In fact, the very opposite is true. The only way the church will not die is to remain true to the Lord and His doctrine. Jesus said the very gates of hell would not prevail against His kingdom (Matthew 16:18) and that it would stand till the end of time when Christ would deliver it up to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24).

On the other hand, Jesus assures us: "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

In the final analysis, it comes down to this: who will you believe -- Jesus Christ and His apostles or the claims of infidels whose faith has been ship-wrecked? Let us put it another way: do you want to be saved or follow infidels to destruction?

--Spring, TX.

## Striving Against Sin

Continued From Page 2

decline and fall of some of Jehovah's people. But neither they nor we need to go astray. The rich provisions of grace and glory envelop our lives when the Prince of heaven enters our being. We can gain a victory over sin for "he that is in us is greater than he that is in them."

"Into My Heart, Into My Heart,

Come Into My Heart, Lord Jesus:

Come In Today; Come In To Stay,

Come Into My Heart, Lord Jesus."

The pleasures of sin are too high priced for wise men to pay. The joys of Christianity are too glorious to miss. The poorest man is the one bereft of Christ. Therefore, let us war valiantly for Truth that sin-cursed humanity can know the peace that Jesus brings.

M. B. Welch, in the famous poem about an old violin,

said:

"And many a man with life out of tune and battered and scarred with sin

Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd much like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,

A game and he travels on

He is going once, he is going twice

He is going -- and almost gone!

But the Master comes and the foolish crowd

Can never quite understand

The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought,

In the touch of the Master's hand."

May we so live that countless souls may live to see the hand of the Lord in their lives. If we do, the glories of eternal sunlight shall be our portion in the land of fadeless day. This is, indeed, our task and privilege!

## AIDS, Anguish And The Right Answer

Glenn Posey

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13-16). Jesus asked the right question. Everyone, but Peter gave the wrong answer.

Sex is sacred and limited to marriage (Hebrews 13:4). Sex outside marriage is fornication or adultery (I Corinthians 7:2). Fornication or adultery is sin

(Galatians 5:19-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10; Romans 1:29-32). Scare tactics are at best temporary fixes.

The people need to be convinced of God's way. The church must focus on its God given mission (I Timothy 3:15; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). Oh, how the world needs the pure, gospel! How long will the Lord's church sit by and watch the world give the wrong answers to man's most perplexing questions? God help the church to preach the gospel, it's God and Jesus. It's the right answer to the right question (Matthew 16:13-15). It's the only hope for a lost and dying world.

## Newborns Addicted To Cocaine

As more women use cocaine regularly, hospitals are reporting more and more sickly newborns.

The number of cocaine babies born to drug-addicted mothers is becoming a crisis said Dr. Brian Udell, Chief Neonatologist at Florida's largest Neonatal unit at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale.

Often, as many as 20 percent of the newborns at the Medical Center are being treated for drug related problems.

Not many realize that saving the life of just one

cocaine baby can cost as much as \$135,000 and this must be paid by the taxpayers. The taxpayer faces paying for decades of care for children who face life marred by medical problems brought on by the mother's use of drugs.

Cocaine affects nerves and constricts blood vessels. It slows the flow of blood and drug-addicted mothers may actually smother their fetuses, said Dr. Laura Finnegan of Philadelphia's Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

AP News Service

March 18, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Full Grown Sin
- Worrying Over Worrying
- I Saw Him Standing There
- Love One Another
- Providence And Worry
- Most Of A Minute\*

Volume 30 Number 12  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words (C Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- Act

## The Lord's Conditions Of Salvation

W. A. Holley

Salvation is a gift of God but it is a conditional gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). Bread is a gift of God but it also is a conditional gift (Matthew 6:11; James 1:17; II Thessalonians 3:10-12). For example, God feeds the birds but they must forage for themselves.

### What Are These Conditions?

(1) Hearing the word of God is one condition of salvation (John 6:44-45). It is in this way one is taught of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:11). The faith that saves comes by hearing the word of the gospel (Romans 10:17). One can understand what God has commanded (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17).

(2) Faith in Christ is another condition of salvation. If one does not believe one dies in his sins (John 8:21, 24). It is not faith only, but a faith that works (Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26; I Thessalonians 1:3). Faith without works is a dead faith!

(3) Repentance is another condition of salvation. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3-5, ASV). God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31).

What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin in godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:8-10). Jesus said that the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of

Jonah (Matthew 12:41), but what did the men of Nineveh do when they repented? We shall permit the Bible to answer: "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way . . ." (Jonah 3:10). It is in this manner that the sinner demonstrates the fruit of repentance in his life (Matthew 3:8).

If the sinner is saved by faith only, repentance is excluded. If one steals a horse, repents and is baptized for remission of sins, how long can he keep the horse?

(4) Another condition of salvation is confessing the sweet name of Jesus Christ before men. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I CONFESS before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-32). Paul taught that the mouth is involved in confessing Christ (Romans 10:9-10). To confess is to openly acknowledge one's faith in the authority of Jesus Christ, or the sins of which one has been guilty (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 17:1-4). The eunuch, before he was baptized, confessed the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:26-39).

(5) Baptism also is one of the Lord's conditions of salvation. Thousands of religious people deny this truth, but it is the truth nevertheless (Mark 16:15-16).

That baptism is a command of God can be seen from reading Acts 10:48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," are the words of the inspired Peter. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16, ASV).

Baptism is a command of God addressed to the alien sinner but not to the child of God. Baptism is a test of love for Christ. Jesus taught that if we love Him we will keep His commandments (John 14:15, 23; I John 5:3).

To be "born again, born of water and the Spirit" refers to "baptism for the remission of sins" (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38). When 3,000 were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," they were "born again, born of water and the Spirit." We have been told that "things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." Thus, "the new birth" equals salvation or conversion (I Peter 3:20-21; Acts 3:19).

One cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism (John 3:3, 5; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). When one reads the Scripture one learns that salvation from past sins is promised after baptism, not before baptism, (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38;

22:16).

The Book of Acts is God's book of conversions. What is written therein is not opinion. There are at least eight cases of conversion found recorded therein. We sincerely ask our readers to read this book to learn how sinners were converted to Christ in the apostolic age. What was taught then should be taught now. The word of God has not changed, the seed (which is the word of God) remains the same, and the human heart has not changed (Luke 8:4-15).

In each case of conversion in the Book of Acts, the preacher was always present, the gospel of Christ was always preached, and those who were persuaded to obey the Lord were always baptized. There

is no exception! We suggest that you read how the Pentecostians were saved (Acts 2:36-38, 47), how the Samaritans were saved (Acts 8:9-13), how the eunuch was saved (Acts 8:26-39), how Saul of Tarsus was saved (Acts 9:3-6, 9; 22:16), how Lydia was saved (Acts 16:13-15), how the Philippian Jailor was saved (Acts 16:29-33), and how the Corinthians were saved (Acts 18:4, 8).

Dear reader, you can know the truth (John 8:30-32). You can believe it and obey it. You can become a New Testament Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). Do it today!

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

## Watch Who You Call Pop!

Dale Jenkins

He burst into the Jacksonville, Florida GMAC office shooting everything that moved. One employee said "He's got an AK-47 and he's killing everyone."

He is James Edward Pough and he killed eight and wounded five before shooting himself. Authorities say the 42-year-old Pough had a violent past. He had shot and killed a man and woman a couple of days earlier, but his record of murder goes all the

way back to 1971 when he fatally shot a man.

As I retell this tragic story I have left out what struck me strangest . . . his nickname, "Pop." The kids in the Florida neighborhood referred to him as "Pop." Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't that a term of affection? A fatherly term for a killer of 11? Man, talk about deceived!

We ought to know who we call "Pop." Just because a man has a friendly smile doesn't make him a candidate

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Full Grown Sin

Glenn Colley

Isaiah describes sin as a separator. That is, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1, 2). Sin will not only separate a man from His God, it will separate him from many important things.

For example, sin will separate a man from his freedom. This fact is seen obviously in our overflowing prison system in America. These incarcerated individuals have chosen to live in a way unacceptable to a civilized society. Therefore they have been separated from society, AND from their freedom.

But sin separates a man from his freedom in other ways too. A man who exercises his freedom to drink beverage alcohol, and continues in this choice, eventually loses his freedom to choose NOT to drink. The same can be said for a man who exercises his freedom to choose to

gamble, or commit adultery, or lie, etc.

In the King James translation of the Bible, James 1:15, we read, "... and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." In the American Standard translation, the verse reads, "... sin, when it is FULL GROWN . . . " For something to be full grown demonstrates that it sustains a growing process. Do you see? Sin grows! What once shocked us, gradually becomes familiar. What once became familiar, becomes appealing. What once became appealing, becomes an object of experimentation. From there, sin, gone unchecked, grows until it produces death. This should be a source of concern for every Christian and every American. Have we lost our ability to be shocked? Have we become familiar and even sometimes passively accepting of sinful behavior?

Although we know that heinous sins have been committed from the early days of time, they haven't always been considered acceptable behavior. And in

America, we are viewing an acceptance of sin unlike any other time in our history.

Recently, in a small Alabama town, a high school teacher explained to her class that homosexuality was not what a person DOES, but rather what a person IS. This is how God made them, and therefore we are cruel to suggest that they are sinful and should change! Here's the shocker: Most of the teenage class agreed.

The Proverb writer had a wretched scene in mind when he penned, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Proverbs 5:22). Those who continue to take sin lightly will one day find it controlling them.

Never forget the words of John when he looked to see the Master coming, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) May God help us to see sin through His eyes instead of through the devil's eyes, and may we ever grow in love and devotion to the only One who can take away sin.

## Worrying Over Worrying

Allen Webster

The three best selling prescription drugs in the United States are: Tagamet (an ulcer medication), Inderal (a hypertensive drug), and Valium (a tranquilizer). The most wealthy, healthy, intelligent, highly-advanced, enlightened generation ever to occupy this orbiting sphere is literally worrying to death.

It is remarkable and unfortunate that Christians are not immune to this disorder.

They have been known to be just as insecure as those whose feet have never stood on the Rock of Ages, whose eyes have not looked to the hills from whence cometh their help, and whose minds are not set on things above. Most saints know that they ought not to worry, so they end up worrying about worrying. What does the Owner's Manual say to do about this malfunction?

Jesus discusses the Christian

and anxiety in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:25-34). He says, "Take no thought" (merimnao) for life (6:25), food (6:31), and tomorrow (6:34). This does not mean not to plan tomorrow's menu, buy winter clothes in the summer, or purchase home or health insurance (cf. II Thessalonians 3:16, 17; I Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 30:25). It means that we are not to "be anxious" for these things.

Continued On Page 4

## I Saw Him Standing There (Or, The Old Gospel Preacher)

I saw him standing there, this man of God,  
Erect and firm, although his hair was gray.  
The passing years had come and they had gone  
To leave the weaker men along the way.

I saw him standing there, his face was fixed,  
And he was unafraid to preach the Word.  
Although the times had changed so many things,  
His message was the same for those who heard.

I saw him standing straight and heard him preach  
That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.  
He preached against men's sins with force and might  
Then called to one and all with pleading nod.

I heard him preach salvation through the blood,  
The message many need to hear today;  
How sinners must believe, and then repent;  
And turn to be baptized the Bible way.

I heard him preach about the church of Christ,  
The precious bride for which our Savior died,  
As he condemned the sects of men as sin,  
And called on all to give up party pride.

I thank the Lord for this, a stalwart man,  
Whose message had that old familiar ring  
Of the apostles' doctrine through and through,  
And this to me was such a noble thing.

I saw him standing there, this man of God,  
His life as faithful as the day is long.  
It gave me courage that I needed most,  
And I felt inspiration to be strong.

--By James E. Gibbons

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# Love One Another

## Neal Pollard

When people refused Jesus, John was one of two brothers who asked Jesus, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54). Jesus rebuked him. The Lord explained that His mission was not to destroy lives.

In the garden at that dark hour of betrayal, Peter drew his sword, "and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear . . ." (John 18:10). Again, Christ called His apostle down and made a gesture of peace.

A treacherous Saul, "yet breathing our threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord . . ." (Acts 9:1), was confronted by Jesus regarding the Benjamite's brutality. Christ asked, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest . . ." (Acts 9:4, 5). Christ wanted His chosen man to end the destruction.

Jesus taught His disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). At another gathering, He said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Later in the same chapter, He added, "These things I command you, that you love one another."

Jesus came to this earth to teach His disciples courage, conviction, spiritual strength, and righteous judgment. This He did by deed and by word (cf. Acts 1:1). But, He also brought His followers a fuller understanding of compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and love through what He did and taught. One did not outweigh the other; rather, every trait complemented the others. The Bible reveals that His apostles and other disciples were listening to Him.

**Paul teaches the source of this command.** In I Thessalonians four, he warns the church of the Thessalonians not to

transgress and defraud their brethren in any situation (verse 6). Paul further teaches that one who rejects his fellow man in reality rejects God (verse 8). Then, he writes, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (verse 9). God says, "love one another" (John 13:34; 15:12).

**Peter teaches the spirit of this command.** Peter encourages Christians suffering fierce persecutions

from without with divine incentives. First, he tells them that their faith in Christ, which had prompted them to love Him (I Peter 1:8), would lead to their salvation (1:9). Also, he reminds those Christians of how much Christ loved them (1:18-21). Then, Peter writes, "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" (1:22). Their brotherly love was to be

sincere and intense. Brotherly love cannot be passive. It demonstrates its concern and care.

**John teaches the strength of this command.** Time declares the strength of the command, for it came "from the beginning" (I John 3:11; II John 5). Teaching from Christ declares the strength of the command (I John 3:23). Treasures declare the strength of the command because "if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love has been perfected in us" (I John

4:12). What benefits!

From whom does the command come? God! How do we obey it? Sincerely and earnestly! Why should we obey it? To please God, strengthen one another, and improve ourselves!

Some are hurting. Others are rejoicing. Many are unfaithful to their Lord. All of us need the blessings which come from giving and receiving brotherly love. Let us say with the Hebrews writer, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1)!

# Providence And Worry

## Johnny Ramsey

Whoever said "worry saps the energy of life" was absolutely correct. Nothing so shackles mankind as do the fetters of care and the bondage of concern over matters we cannot control. Folk who have not learned to trust in God and His providential power are truly to be pitied. Such people are bereft of the guidance of the Almighty and the serenity of a life surrounded by the blessings of Christianity. In 1850 Charles Dickens, in jest, wrote these words:

"Without Providence, what would become of the undertakers?"

There are cynics in every age who only ascribe death and suffering to God but never give Him credit for life and peace. Two centuries ago Cowper left penetrating words for his fellows to ponder:

"Behind a frowning providence

He hides a smiling face and works His sovereign will."

There is a passage in Psalms 97 that mightily contributes to our study concerning the vivid contrast between trusting in God and in being overwhelmed with worry. Let us notice the component parts of this rich section of the Old Testament.

No chapter of the Bible is any grander to emphasize the sovereignty of Jehovah and the twin attributes that grace His name -- righteousness and

justice. These are truly landmarks for living that should produce gladness in our hearts. In two verses that precede our study of Psalms 97 we rejoice in these comforting thoughts:

"That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth"

and  
"O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

These pungent words of Psalms 83:18 and 84:12 remind us of the all-seeing eye of God, who alone can properly direct our faltering steps. Earth's temporal problems and difficulties cannot compare to eternal verities overseen by the One who is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalms 90:2). W. E. Brightwell beautifully wrote:

"The future beckons and I bow

My God removes the care  
Behold, He goes before me now

And will my way prepare.

He's here, and there, and everywhere

In all the ways I've trod,  
I've never passed beyond the sphere

Of the providence of God."

When we, as the creatures, glorify our Creator, the best of heaven and earth mesh in a rainbow of hope and beauty.

But, when men do not like to retain God in their knowledge only chaos and ruin abide (Romans 1:28). The proper attitude for us is contained in the marvelous words of another Psalm:

"O Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

There are basically three major points in the last part of Psalms 97 that ought to be emblazoned upon our hearts:

- (1) If we love the Lord we must also hate evil.
- (2) God preserves our souls.
- (3) We should rejoice at the remembrance of His holiness.

We learn from these verses

that God's providence and man's personal surrender to heaven's will go hand in hand. We cannot expect the benevolent mercy of the Father to sustain us if we war against the mandates of glory.

He is able to guide us with unerring counsel and even receive us ultimately to that supernal realm but we can

cancel such wondrous appointments with lives that are stubborn and rebellious (Matthew 23:37; John 1:11).

One of the Bible's most encouraging verses is Psalms 97:11 for faithful followers of Jehovah:

"Light is sown for the

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

You know what "sibling rivery" is. It's based on the instinctive competitive spirit in brothers and sisters. Have you ever heard your children playing when suddenly the play goes sour, and one child says to the other, "I don't have to do what you say . . . you're not my boss!" What the child is actually declaring is that the one giving instructions to him really has no authority over him.

Some times we adults ignore or rebel against would-be authorities. Some look to the police and say, "They can't tell me what to do!" Others become dissatisfied with their employer and say, "You can't tell me what to do."

This same idea can be applied to religion. Many folks today are by their lifestyles saying to God, "I don't have to do what you say . . . You aren't my boss!" This is why the first prerequisite to pleasing our God is self-denial. To please our maker we must be willing to say, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Listen to I Peter 5:6 -- "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

# Worrying Over Worrying

Continued From Page 2

Note His four reasons Christians are not to worry.

**CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE BIRDS** (6:26). Whoever said that "worrying is for the birds" was off the mark. Birds do not worry. Who ever heard of a bird taking ulcer medication, committing suicide because his stocks crashed, or killing over with a heart attack? Birds are not concerned with the future, yet they form no lines at soup kitchens or welfare offices. God takes care of them.

Surely, God could not be charged with watching out for sparrows and neglecting His own children! We are made in the image of God and infused with a soul from the Father (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7;

Hebrews 12:9). Birds are not. Thus, if God cares for them, He cares more for us (Matthew 10:29-31; cf. Romans 8:32).

**CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE CUBIT** (6:27). Who ever heard of a short man worrying himself into a larger size? Or has it ever been reported that worrying lengthened someone's life? No! Worry is useless. The word stature (helikia) indicates "a stage of growth whether measured by age or stature" (Abbott-Smith). Thus Jesus is saying worry will not make you taller or older (though it may make you appear so!). "Worry never climbed a hill; worry never

paid a bill; worry never dried a tear; worry never darned a heel; worry never cooked a meal; worry never composed a song to sing; actually, worry never did a worthwhile thing." "Worry is like a rocking chair, it keeps you busy, but gets you nowhere."

No one can lengthen his life by worrying, but there is evidence that worry can shorten it. When it comes to long life, what we are eating is important, but what is eating us is more important! Studies indicate that 70% of all illnesses are psychosomatic ("of, relating to, involving, or concerned with bodily symptoms caused by mental or emotional disturbance").

Worry has been listed as a leading cause of heart trouble, high blood pressure, stomach disorders and respiratory ailments. "I have never known a man to die from hard work, but many who have died from doubt" (Dr. Charles Mayo). The old English root from which we get worry means "to strangle," and people are strangling their lives with anxiety. If for no other reason, we should not worry because it is destructive to the Spirit's temple (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Worry falls into three classes. (1) *Things that have already happened.* Why worry? Eggs cannot be unscrambled and toothpaste cannot be put back in the tube. "Most worries are reruns" (Reader's Digest). Paul learned to put the past behind him (Philippians 3:13-14). If sin is involved, we should cleanse it in Christ's blood (Acts 22:16; Acts 8:22; I John 1:7), and go on.

(2) *Things which must happen.* All the worry in the world cannot change some things, for they will happen anyway. We are going to die (Hebrews 9:27), so why worry about it? Prepare and let it come (Philippians 1:21).

(3) *Things which will never happen.* "It is not the tornadoes that get us, but the termites." It is said that 85 percent of what we worry over

never happens. Why should we waste our time (Ephesians 5:16)? Time should be invested in working. The ant wastes no time worrying about the future. Instead, it constantly works to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6-8). "Go to the ant."

**CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE FATHER.** It is sinful to worry because it says, in effect, "I do not trust my Father to take care of me." Worry is praying to the wrong god and is therefore an insult to Jehovah (cf. Psalms 37:1; Proverbs 3:5, 6; Philippians 4:6, 7).

Problems become smaller when they are seen in God's shadow. Martha was troubled about many things, but Mary was sitting at Jesus feet (Luke 10:38-42). Guess which one was content! "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Our coins say, "In God We Trust," and so should our hearts (Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 9:10).

God is unlimited in what He can do (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19), so my problems are not very big to Him. It is much like a child who becomes frustrated with a knotted shoestring. To him it is a major problem and an unsolvable dilemma. He may even deem it worth several tears. Daddy smiles to himself and quickly unties it. The difference is a matter of perspective. Our major difficulties are only knotted shoestrings to Almighty God. Why get so upset?

A minute of prayer is better than an hour of worrying (Philippians 4:6). We read where Jesus spent an entire night in prayer, but never where He spent one second in worry. His example is worthy of imitation (I Peter 2:21-22).

**CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE.** God made us a promise, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (6:33). He will keep it for He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). If we worry about physical things after He said He would take care of them, we are telling Him that we think He is a liar or incapable of keeping His word. If we will faithfully worship Him, live right, work diligently in His vineyard, and put Him ahead of everything else, we will not miss any meals or die of exposure.

Jesus closes this section of His famous sermon by saying, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). Each day has sufficient problems to solve without borrowing any from tomorrow. William Tyndale translated it, "For the day present hath ever enough of its own trouble."

We must learn to concentrate on today instead of yesterday and tomorrow. Philippians 3:13 teaches us to forget the things of the past. Matthew 6:34 teaches that each day has enough trouble of its own. Yesterday is a canceled check, tomorrow is a promissory note, only today is cash. God wants us to walk in the light He gives us, and not worry about the darkness beyond. When we get there, His light and help will make it clear. When we drive our cars at night, the headlights do not shine all the way to our destinations. They shine just a few feet in front of the car, but as we move forward, they keep ahead of us. God's light works the same way. The Master says, "Live one day at a time."

## Providence And Worry

Continued From Page 3

righteous,

and gladness for the upright in heart."

C. M. Wilson sets forth an anthem of praise for saints who deeply trust in the providence of God:

"Sing on, ye joyful pilgrims  
While here on earth we stay,  
Let songs of home and Jesus  
Beguile each fleeting day;  
Sing on the grand old story

Of His redeeming love,  
The everlasting chorus  
That fills the realms above!"

Verily, relying upon the providence of a gracious Creator ought to dissolve the weighty load of worry so many mortals carry with them daily. Let us trust in the Lord and lean upon our own wisdom (Proverbs 3:5-7).

## Watch Who You Call Pop!

Continued From Page 1

for such a caring title.

It occurs to me that Satan plays this game with us. Can you hear him? "Come on, just call me dad" he says with a gleam in his eye and a piece of fruit in his hand. "I'm your friend." He holds out lovely things that in reality rot the soul. He speaks with smooth words and then opens his jacket to reveal deadly weapons that can inflict eternal death (second death) to the soul.

There is only one real Father! And from His hand

flows "every good gift" (James 1:17). He longs for us to address Him with Fatherly terms (Matthew 23:9). He will hold back nothing that is best for His people (Matthew 7:7-11). Our Real Father's love is present at all times, not just when we follow Him, He loves us at our worst (Psalms 103:13, Romans 5:8-10). I John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

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- Are We Slaves To Freedom?
- Dramatic Bible Verses
- Christ At The Door
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Dependables

Volume 30 Number 13  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## "Lord Jesus, Come Into My Heart"

**Basil Overton**  
Nothing is more important to anyone than Christ being in his heart. Therefore nothing is more important to anyone than his understanding what the New Testament teaches on how one can have Jesus to dwell in his heart.

### Many Television Evangelists

Many television evangelists tell lost people something like this. "Bow your head right where you are and repeat after me. Say, 'Lord Jesus I know I am a sinner. I believe you died on Calvary for my sins. I repent of all my sins, and I am sorry for the sins I have committed. Please, Lord, forgive me and come into my heart.'"

Then these evangelists will say something like this, "Now that you have prayed, Jesus has forgiven you; you are saved; and Jesus has come into your heart." My love for people compels me to say this is an awful deception, because there is absolutely no evidence in the Bible that this is the way for those not Christians to be forgiven and become Christians and have Jesus to come into their hearts. I am grieved and my heart aches because so many are deceived by this teaching on television and in other ways.

Those who teach and practice such on television or anywhere else, may be completely sincere, and those who are deceived by such teaching and practice may be

absolutely sincere. However this does not mean they are right.

### Feelings And Faith

One's feelings come as a result of what he believes. If he believes truth which generates feelings in his heart, his feelings are not proof that he has believed truth. Truth is not truth because people believe it. Truth is truth because it is true, or because it is so. And it is true, or it is so, whether anyone believes it, or does not believe it.

If one believes error, thinking it is true, his feelings will be just the same as if what he believed were really true.

### Some Who Prayed

Jesus said a publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and that this publican was saved or justified (Luke 18:13, 14). However, this publican was a child of God under the old covenant, or law of Moses. That covenant was abolished when Jesus died on the cross (Ephesians 2; Colossians 2; John 1:17). Therefore, the case of this publican is not an example of how one became a Christian, and how Jesus comes into the heart of one who is not a child of God, or not a Christian.

Saul of Tarsus prayed after Jesus appeared to him on Damascus road (Acts 9:10-16). But this case does not prove that an alien sinner (as Saul was at that time) was saved from his sins by the Lord Jesus Christ, by his praying. Instead this case is

proof that an alien sinner is not saved by praying, because the Lord Jesus told Saul on Damascus Road, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 10:6).

When Saul got into Damascus and was lodged in the house of Judas on Straight Street (Acts 9:11) the Lord instructed a disciple in Damascus named Ananias to go to Saul to tell him what he had to do.

Did Ananias tell Saul to repeat after him and say, "Lord Jesus, I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins. Please forgive me, and come into my heart?" No, indeed! Instead Ananias told Saul "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

What Ananias told Saul of Tarsus to do shows us clearly how one can call on the name of the Lord. This obviously means that when one is baptized he calls on, or relies on the name, or the authority of Jesus Christ, and he reaches the saving power of the blood of Jesus because he is baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3) where he reaches the washing, or cleansing power of the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7).

All TV evangelists, who have not done so, should do what Saul of Tarsus did in order to have his sins washed away in the blood of Christ,

and then they should tell all those out of Christ who are penitent believers what Ananias told Saul, instead of having them to repeat after them a prayer like that in the second paragraph of this article!

### Christ Does Come In

When one does what Saul of Tarsus did, Christ does come into his heart. Christ dwells in the hearts of Christians by faith (Ephesians 3:17). If you study the New Testament you realize that this has to mean that the evidence that Christ dwells in one's heart is not his feelings, but his faith. This faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

God's word teaches that Christians are in Christ, and Christ is in them (Colossians 1:2, 27). So, the only evidence that this is true is the fact that God's word says it.

A Christian feels good when

he believes he is in Christ, and Christ is in him, but the evidence that he is in Christ and Christ is in him is not that he feels good, but the evidence is that God's word says he is in Christ and Christ is in him!

We do not have to understand, or rationalize how Christ can dwell in our hearts in order for him to dwell in our hearts. Neither do we have to rationalize how we can dwell in Christ in order to dwell in him. We cannot rationalize one of these any better than we can rationalize the other, but we can believe both, because God's word says both. We accept both by faith. All we have to go by on these great concepts is what God said about them!

--P.O. Box 2279, Florence, AL 35630.

## It Is Time For Them To Go

### E. Claude Gardner

The political refrain, "It is time for them to go," was echoed often in the last presidential campaign. Without any intention of endorsing or opposing the political intent of the statement, it is appropriate to adopt this sentiment in the brotherhood. Yes, "It is time for them to go." The "them"

are those who are bent on "changing" the church. However, in principle they have beat us to the draw for they by their attacks and scorn say to us, "It is time for you to go."

Out of a troubled and confused heart we have prayed for peace in the brotherhood. We wish some of

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## What Is A Blessed Man?

Glenn Colley

Those of us who enjoy studying the Word of God are always eager to broaden our understanding of oft used and familiar passages and words and doctrines. Consider the word "Blessed."

For years, while teaching from Matthew 5 on the Beatitudes, men have said, "Blessed means happy." In fact, a couple of translations translate the word "Happy." We are convinced that the word means much more.

In the King James Bible translation of the Bible, there are two major words translated blessed. They are "Ulogo," and "Makarion." Makarion is the original word for blessed in the Beatitudes.

Thayer says the word carries the idea of congratulations, with the reason expressed by a noun or predicate in the verse (Page 386, #3701).

I suggest that the word blessed in these verses (Matthew 5:3-11) is actually a congratulation which means, "approved of God." This definition holds true in many other verses as well. It is clearly the case in Matthew 25:34 where the King will say, "Come ye blessed of My Father,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Keeping in mind our "Approved of God" definition, read these verses containing the word *Blessed*:

"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28).

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching . . ." (Luke 12:37).

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7, 8).

"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).

"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).

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

"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 labors; and their works do follow them'" (Revelation 14:13).

"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).

There are of course other uses of the word blessed, and perhaps they all would imply happiness in some respect. When it comes to our eternal destiny however, we do not simply want to be happy. We first want to be approved of God. May we all live prepared for His return so that when the trumpet sounds we will hear those sweet words from our Master's lips, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

## How Much Water?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"How much water do you think is necessary for baptism? Would sprinkling be an acceptable form of baptism?"

Let's go to the New Testament of Christ for an answer to your question. Please note:

1. "Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, *because there was much water there*. And they came and were baptized" (John 3:23).

•Why would "much water" be necessary if sprinkling was an acceptable form of baptism?

•Does sprinkling require "much water?"

2. "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said,

Continued On Page 4

## Are We Slaves To Freedom?

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

Freedom! Many throughout the centuries have lost their lives for it, and it is probable that, until time is no more, mankind will continually die for this great and noble cause. The headlines even this day continue to remind us of the price that must be paid for men and women to obtain and keep freedom.

In this country we have claimed the blessings of freedom for over two hundred years, but the sad reality is that our freedom is becoming slavery. We indeed are becoming slaves to freedom. Humanistic and socialistic ideologies are threatening to enslave us to our own individualism. Political forces are working to hold us captive to a set of beliefs promoted by a world which feels it knows the definition of true freedom when, in fact, it does not. The truth is that mankind has chosen slavery to the prince of this world (John 14:30). There seems to be a general desire to gain more material goods to the neglect of spiritual treasure. We would do far better to remember the words of our Lord, "What shall a man profit, if he gain the whole world, yet lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Our world is plunging deeper and deeper into bondage; bondage to possession, to our fleshly passions, to political ties, to our jobs, families, et. al. Notice three ways freedom is obtained.

1. The Bible teaches that

true physical freedom can only come when we are spiritually enslaved to Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren, ". . . he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant" (7:22). Paul exhorted the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). Paul also wrote,

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6).

2. The scriptures proclaim that only those who have been enlightened by the truth can enjoy meaningful spiritual freedom. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Almost everyone recognizes the freedom that comes from knowledge. We love the idea of conversing with someone we perceive to be more knowledgeable than ourselves, because it gives us a feeling of freedom. The freedom that can be enjoyed through the knowledge of God's word is far more satisfying and of greater value than any temporal freedom we can gain, because it is eternal.

3. God's word declares that freedom only comes when

Continued On Page 4



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# Dramatic Bible Verses

## Johnny Ramsey

There are many startling words, verses and thoughts in the Holy Scriptures. The sacred text is never dull and often fascinating literature. After forty years of almost daily study it never ceases to amaze me how enthralling the Bible truly is. Take, for example, the word found in II Kings 18:

### Nehushtan!

Hezekiah was purging idolatry from Judah and found the brazen serpent God commanded Moses to place before Israel as recorded many years previously in the book of Numbers. It had been preserved but now was used for idolatrous purposes. The king declared that it was nehushtan -- only a piece of brass! What once had been a symbol of Jehovah's authority was now used as vain worship.

Another dramatic occasion in the Old Testament is found in II Samuel 18:33 where David, with broken heart, learns of the death of Absalom. That son of the king ended life in rebellion to God and his father. In earnest anguish of soul, the sweet singer of Israel hauntingly cries:

O Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee . . .

David had earlier, by his own iniquity, sown evil into the family of God and had set in motion what Nathan had promised:

The sword will never depart from thine house. . .

In Revelation 6:17, with language borrowed from the prophets, we read of the great day of the Lord -- impending judgment -- coming for wicked men. Such ungodly ones will pray rocks and caves to hide them from the fierce wrath of God when so few will be spared. What an awesome occasion it shall be when the final confrontation with Deity arrives for sinful mankind. Brother Teddlie wrote this powerful gospel song:

Someday you will stand at the bar on high

Someday your record you

will see

Someday you will answer the question of life

What will your answer be?...

In Hosea 11:8 Jehovah faces the challenge of wrath and love meeting in His dealing with Israel. As bondage stands in the balance, the Creator acknowledges the struggle He has with the disobedient ones of Abraham's seed:

O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up?

To be consistent, in the process of ungodly people reaping what they sowed, God had to release them for punishment by an evil nation but, still, it broke His heart. When mercy and truth meet together the Judge of all the earth will do what is right (Genesis 18:25). Abraham learned that lesson when ten godly men could not be found in Sodom!

In I Samuel 12 we see the heartbreak of Samuel in dealing with the carnality of Saul and the nation he led. The gracious prophet said to the King:

God forbid that I should cease to pray for you . . .

In accord with Jehovah's word to Jeremiah concerning Judah years later we come to understand Samuel's plaintive cry. In three chapters of Jeremiah we find these sad words from God:

Do not pray for these people. Why? Their heart was an adamant stone as Zechariah 7 clearly enunciates. The clay would not bend to the potter's will (Jeremiah 18; Romans 9:20-22). Exhortation and bold rebuke must precede prayer in certain situations because of the hardness of heart in the rebellious lives of mankind (Hebrews 3:13-15).

My stubborn will at last has yielded

I would be thine and thine alone . . .

Another verse of deep pathos is found in John 6:67 where our Lord fervently asked the intimate few who followed Him:

Will you also go away?

Many turned away from the Savior when they learned that truth was more important than

loaves and fishes. Material values were secondary to spiritual devotion in the kingdom of God. Just as in our day, that consideration was repulsive to the masses.

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

The rich young ruler of Mark 10 went away in sorrow when he counted the cost of discipleship and was unwilling to pay the price. So many follow no longer in the way of Christ when they learn indeed that grace is not cheap!

One of the strangest passages in the Bible is I Corinthians 16:22. Therein is the key to heaven or hell. If unprepared when Jesus comes we shall be cut off without the favor of

God.

### Anathema Maranatha!

Those unusual words, in this text, point out the tragedy of going through our earthly existence emphasizing the wrong things. To find God's disfavor at judgment will be a loss difficult to contemplate. To miss heaven will give full meaning to the phrase . . . LOST BEYOND RECALL.

Or, at the last, shall it be mine to find

All that I worked for, I left behind.

But, by far, the most dramatic Bible verse is Matthew 27:46 wherein Jesus cried:

My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The willingness of Christ to die for us and bear the burden of our sins upon the cross (I

Peter 2:24) is proof of the deepest love the world has ever known. When Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53) the most eloquent display of vicarious concern and suffering was demonstrated to mankind. In the words of a provoking hymn:

Hallelujah -- What A Savior!

Hebrews 2:3 dramatically asks us a burning question . . .

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

The richness, beauty and appeal of Scripture warms our heart and thrills our soul. To God be the glory for all the great things He has done!

He bore it all that I might live . . .

## Christ At The Door

### Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The closing verses of Revelation 3 portray one of the most lamentable yet mercy-filled scenes found in Holy Writ. Lukewarmness had conquered Laodicean hearts and the saving Jesus had been rejected. Had our lovely Lord possessed less than perfect mercy and long-suffering, He might have cast them forever to their deserved fate. But with the Lord "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" and "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalm 85:10; 89:14). His compassionate mercy prompted Him to linger at the door of each Laodicean's heart with the hope of re-entrance. In the Lord's marvelous message which He vouchsafed to John on Patmos and which was to be conveyed to the Laodiceans, we observe unmerited favor toward faltering saints in heavenly action, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he

with me" (Revelation 3:20). The Messianic pleader at the door in this passage has inspired many a sermon, prompted musical poets to set the pathetic scene to hymnal music and has furnished the challenge for gifted artists to portray the rejected Redeemer upon lifelike canvas. As a little child my very first Bible contained a picture of Jesus

knocking at the door. That picture was stamped indelibly upon my mind as the Interested Intercessor pleaded for an invitation to re-enter. More than a quarter of a century ago the following story was told in my presence. It, too, forms a fixed memory in my mind. I think you will

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Some time ago my wife and I attended a Gospel meeting with a congregation of our black brethren. Now, while their worship was quite scriptural, I did notice several little things to which I wasn't accustomed. I caught myself letting my mind wander to those differences and admiring the spirit of the brethren.

It came time for prayer. We all bowed our heads as one brother led the prayer. Then something hit me. While my eyes were closed in prayer there were no skin colors before me. We were just a group of God's people in a building praying together. No black or white or prejudice or bigotry.

Wouldn't it be proper for us to push aside our prejudices as if we were color blind when it comes to the way I treat my fellow man?

James 2:9 says, "But if you have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

Let's always remember that the good or bad of any person is deeper than their skin.

# Christ At The Door

Continued From Page 3

find it of interest.

A famous artist was moved by Revelation 3:20 to paint the Saviour of men standing before the door. With brush in hand and a canvas before him that gifted mind and talented hand began the long and painstaking process. Finally, the great picture stood completed. The artist was ready for the revelation of his work to fellow artists. As they surveyed the picture one of them pronounced it a masterpiece but offered one criticism. He remarked that the artist had Jesus standing before a door minus a knob. There was no apparent way for Jesus to re-enter! The artist quickly explained that such was not an oversight on his part but that the doorknob had been purposely omitted. "You see," said the artist, "the doorknob is on the inside, not the outside. The one on the inside alone can open the door." The artist had recognized the Biblical doctrine of man's free agency.

Jesus desires entrance initially into alien hearts and re-entry into backsliding hearts such as modern day Laodiceans. But as desirous of human communion as He is, the very nature of His religion forbids His making a

compulsory entrance. The doorknob is still on the inside of your heart and mine. Unless we allow Him the desired entrance He will remain outside. Those who keep Him outside in the here and now will be OUTSIDE heaven in the there and then.

Dear Reader, perhaps you have never allowed the Stranger at the door of your heart in though multitudes of times He has knocked lovingly and mercifully through the marvelous medium of His proclaimed word. Will you not let this faithful friend in? The sweet consolations of His redeeming love can be yours upon complete submission to His prescribed conditions of salvation. Perhaps Jesus was once very much a part of the lives of some of you. You've heard Him preached, believed upon Him from the heart, repented of your sins, graced your lips with that memorable confession and through baptism the door was fully open for Him to come into your hearts, which He did. your early Christian life was warmly engaged with activity as you heartily rendered loving service to your newly accepted Lord. Are you still rooted and grounded in His

love and find your deepest satisfaction in serving Him or are you among those who have turned their backs upon man's great benefactor? If in the latter group you find yourself, then Jesus is truly outside again. Will you not read carefully what Peter told Simon in Acts 8:22. what

James told his readers in James 5:16 and what John wrote his dear children in I John 1:9? I plead with you to let Him back in today for He stands there NOW as Saviour; TOMORROW you may stand before His door of judgment. Remember what you do with

Him today at your door determines what He will do to you when before the door of His judgment you once shall stand.

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

## How Much Water?

Continued From Page 2

"If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. *And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water . . .*" (Acts 8:36-39a).

•How did Luke describe the baptism of the eunuch? Was he 1) sprinkled with water, or 2) immersed into water?

•If sprinkling was an acceptable form of baptism, why did Philip go to the trouble of taking the eunuch "down into the water" and then bringing him "up out of the water?"

3. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus

were baptized into His death? *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:3-4). "*Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead*" (Colossians 2:12).

•Did Paul say we were 1) buried, 2) sprinkled with Christ?

•Could sprinkling serve as a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? Could an immersion (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 6:17)?

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## It Is Time For Them To Go

Continued From Page 1

the most able and talented brethren among us would return -- not to us but to their first love. It is a "terrible thing to waste" the intellectual power of some who have chosen the path of liberalism. We do not want to see them go and we love them and pray for them. If imploring and reasoning with them from the Scripture will not dissuade them, then they should leave before they wreak havoc in the brotherhood.

We have no alternative but to begin "marking" those who have espoused false teaching. Paul wrote, "Now I beseech

you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). Among us are those who teach: instrumental music in worship is not sinful; women should be able to preach and teach over men; faith only; grace only; baptism is not essential; the Lord's Supper can be eaten on any day. Indeed, "it is time for all of them to go." Now is the hour to save our children.

--Chancellor, Freed-Hardeman University.

## Are We Slaves To Freedom?

Continued From Page 2

we have stored our treasure in the proper place. I have known several individuals who have literally tortured themselves, anguishing over their material goods and the fear of the loss of them. The greatest and most peaceful freedom comes when we know that our treasure is safe. Notice the words of Christ, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal; But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,

where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:19-20).

The price of true freedom is too valuable to squander. The blood of Christ has purchased us, therefore we must serve Him all our days. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). "For ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men" (I Corinthians 7:23).

--1705 Starview Dr., Salem, VA 24153.

## The Dependables

There is a group in the church that is taken for granted so much that we forget what they are worth to the Lord. I have reference to the nucleus in every congregation around which all activities revolve. These people go to worship whether they are visited or not. They volunteer for many tasks. When the doors of the meeting house are open they are present. They seek out and speak to visitors. They are the first to respond to a need. Many of them teach classes, and have done so for years without a "vacation."

When trouble comes, they meet it as best they can, and go right on serving God. If they are disappointed, they look to Him who never disappoints, and go right on doing right. Through the years they have met with sorrows, hurts and troubles just like those that come to us all, and never once consider quitting. These people are seldom ever thanked. Others get attention, are visited and encouraged. But these because of their faithfulness and constant service, seldom get the recognition they deserve. But if by some tragedy they were suddenly taken away from a congregation, their worth would be appreciated. They are the life of our congregation and of every congregation of the world.

Selected

April 1, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- The Two Objectives In Correcting Our Children (Hebrews 12:9, 11)
  - Pride
  - Growth
- "Jesus Is Coming Soon?"
  - "Most Of A Minute"
- Growing Old Gracefully
  - As Christians
  - The Christian

Volume 30 Number 14  
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# The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 2

## Why You Should Not Belong To "The Campbellite Church"

### Basil Overton

Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister of Northern Ireland, came to America in 1807 from his native land. The trip across the Atlantic took thirty-five days. He settled in Washington, Pennsylvania. His wife and children joined him in Pennsylvania in 1809.

One of Thomas Campbell's children was Alexander. Thomas was dismissed by officials in the Presbyterian Church because he refused to preach what they wanted him to preach and instead insisted on preaching what the Bible said. He and his son, Alexander, were distressed over the divisions in the Presbyterian Church. There were six sects in that church at that time. They were: the Burghers and the Anti-burghers; the Seceders and the Non-seceders; and the Old Lights and the New Lights.

### A Major Decision

Thomas and Alexander Campbell made the major decision to turn from all that division and confusion and to search the Scriptures to see what they should do. There are many details which space will not allow me to mention. (My being a teacher of church history for many years at International Bible College makes it difficult for me to condense the stirring story of the Campbells and others who worked diligently to be sure they were following the Bible

instead of human creeds).

### Their Baptism

Alexander Campbell began to preach in 1810. He married Margaret Brown on March 12, 1811. Their first child was born March 13, 1812.

Alexander decided to study the Greek New Testament to see whether or not it authorized him to sprinkle Jane, that first child of his and Margaret's. He discovered that the Greek word for baptism meant immerse. He also discovered there was no teaching in the New Testament that authorized the baptizing of infants. He learned that the baptism in water that he read about in the Bible, was for those who believed in the Lord and repented of their sins. He realized that an infant could not believe, and it could not repent, and was not sinful anyway.

### They Were Immersed

By studying the New Testament Alexander Campbell learned that he and his family, including his beloved parents, had really not been baptized as the Bible taught. Wednesday, June 12, 1912 he and six others were immersed in a deep pool in Buffalo Creek near Washington, Pennsylvania. Soon thereafter nearly all in the Brush Run Church were immersed. That church had been organized after the Campbells turned from Presbyterianism.

### Earlier Churches

Before the Campbells and their associates were baptized, there were churches of Christ in the British Isles and in America. The Campbells did not start the church of Christ. The church of Christ was started by Christ in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost following his resurrection from the dead, Acts 2. Jesus had promised He would build His church, Matthew 16:13-19.

By the preaching of the gospel, congregations of the Lord's church were established in many places in the Greek and Roman cultures by the time Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, predicted there would be a great apostasy or falling away of the Lord's church. At that time, God's children would turn away from the truth (Acts 20:28-30; I Timothy 4:1-6; II Timothy 4:1-6; II Thessalonians 2).

### Results Of The Apostasy

The apostasy predicted by the Holy Spirit resulted in the development of what came to be known as the Catholic Church. About the middle of the eleventh century A.D. this church was divided into two groups: (1) The Western Church or Roman Catholic Church, and (2) The Eastern Church or Greek Catholic Church.

Later other denominations were started by various religious leaders and much

religious confusion and division prevailed, such as the six sects in Presbyterianism at the time of the Campbell's mentioned above.

### Other Efforts

Before the Campbells were baptized in 1812 there were churches of Christ started in a number of places in America. Efforts were made in New England by Dr. Abner Jones and Elias Smith and others, to follow the New Testament instead of human creeds and to get away from denominational divisions. Of one congregation started by these efforts, Elias Smith wrote: "When our number was some short of twenty, we agreed to consider ourselves a church of Christ, owning Him as our only Master, Lord, and Lawgiver, and we agreed to consider ourselves Christians, without the addition of any unscriptural name" (Elias Smith, The Life and Conversion of Elias Smith, pages 313, 314).

Barton Warren Stone and others left denominationalism and started churches of Christ after the New Testament order of things before the Campbells came to America.

The Rocky Springs Church of Christ has been meeting near Bridgeport, Alabama since 1807. That church was started five years before the Campbells came to America. It was my pleasure to preach for the Rocky Springs congregation three years ago.

The Old Philadelphia Church of Christ in Warren County, Tennessee was started in 1810, which was two years before the Campbells were baptized. There were other churches of Christ which were started in various places in America before the Campbells were members of the church of Christ.

### No Such Church

As far as I know there is no such church as "the Campbellite church." If there is, history proves that Thomas and Alexander Campbell did not start it. Their efforts were designed to keep people from starting new churches. They stressed that people should follow the Bible and thereby get into the church we can all read about in that Book.

Alexander Campbell published a paper many years called The Millennial Harbinger. In 1830, Spencer Clack accused Alexander of teaching "Campbellism." In reply to Mr. Clack, brother Campbell wrote the following in the July, 1830 issue of The Millennial Harbinger on page 293."

"If I say and write that Jesus arose from the dead the third day, do you say that this is but my opinion! If I say that the disciples met upon the first day of the week for worship, do you tell the people that this is my opinion! If I exhort the churches to meet every Lord's day to worship and rejoice in

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

# Pride

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18).

It is so sad to see pride destroy the lives and attitudes of men and women, both Christian and non-Christian. It seems that more and more the church is being affected by those whose pride will not allow them to humbly come to Christ through obedience to His word. Perhaps even more sad is to see faithful brethren overcome with the "condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:6; cf. II Peter 2:4). This sin, which God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19; 8:13; 16:5), is creeping its way into the lives of preachers and elders, deacons and teachers. Pride has a way of slipping up on one and causing one to do things he would have previously condemned. It was the pride of life that clenched Eve in the garden of Eden. "And when the woman saw that the tree was . . . a tree desirable to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat" (Genesis 3:6).

Pride will stop men who have sinned from admitting it. They cannot find the inner strength to say the words, "I'm sorry" or "I was wrong" or, perhaps even harder to say, "I have sinned in this specific way." The Bible teaches that confession is a necessary part of the Christian life (Matthew 5:21-24; 18:15-17; James 5:16). Pride will cause a man to belittle his own sin or shift the attention when he is confronted by saying, "Well, you know, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23)." Whereas he speaks the truth relative to the universal nature

Continued On Page 4

## The Two Objectives In Correcting Our Children

(Hebrews 12:9, 11)

Glenn Colley

Some tasks in life, by their very nature, offer only one kind of training: On the job training. For the most part, that's true about the task of parenting. Most of what we learn comes after the babies are born. Ephesians 6:4 places special responsibilities on the shoulders of daddys. It says, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Hebrews 12 compares the chastening of the Lord toward Christians, and the chastening of our fleshly fathers toward their children. From this we learn two important objectives in the correction of our children.

The first objective is to gain the respect of the child. Hebrews 12:9 says, "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?" Implied here is that seeking the reverence (or respect) of our children is an appropriate motivation for correcting the children. Here are some suggestions for parents as they work to dole out discipline to their children and achieve this respect of parents:

**1. Try to never shout at your children.** Teach them to obey your word simply because it is you who is saying it, and not because you are saying it loudly and frightfully. It is better to bind your children to you by

a feeling of respect, and by gentleness, than by fear.

**2. Never permit your child to challenge your position or authority as a parent without correction.** At an early age make the consequence of open rebellion unpleasant. Spanking, at an appropriate time, is good.

Mothers should not have to chase their children. When a mother says, "Come here," her child should obey. If the child goes the other way, the parent's authority is being challenged. Spank. Then repeat the scene right then for practice: "Let's try this again. Come here." Teach the child what respecting you involves.

**3. Don't make hollow threats of spanking.** If the parent says, "Don't touch that book," and the action continues, the parent may say, "I told you not to touch the book. If you don't stop, I will spank you." Now if the child continues the parent may simply walk over and physically remove the child from the book without a spanking. In this case the parent has failed to instill respect. Unless you learn that you were wrong to promise spanking, then be sure to deliver.

The second objective from Hebrews 12 is in verse 11. It says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Notice that the correction (or punishment)

is to be grievous, or painful. However, remember that Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, provoke them not to wrath. . . ." Another translation says, "Don't goad your children to resentment." In other words, by putting these two key passages together, we learn that our correction is to be unpleasant (or grievous) Hebrews 12:11, but it is not to provoke our children to resentment, Ephesians 6:4. Perhaps the best way to consider this point is to suggest some parenting methods which DO "provoke our children to wrath," so we can avoid them while correcting our children:

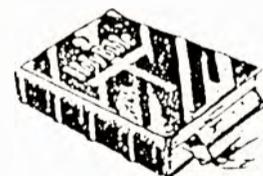
**1. Physical abuse.** Consider the benefits of only using your hand to spank your children. Using a belt or a piece of wood makes the correction difficult to accurately measure. Use self control. If you are not completely under control, have your spouse to administer the spanking, or postpone it briefly until you can regain your composure. Spanking is to teach an unpleasant consequence to wrong behavior. It is not to injure the child physically or emotionally.

**2. Parental inconsistency.** Parents need to ACT like parents. They need to convey a secure message of boundaries and the difference between right and wrong. When parents teach one thing and personally practice another thing contrary to their teaching, they provoke their children to resentment. In

addition, parents should work to be consistent about punishment. If Johnny fails to pick up his shoes on Monday and is punished; he fails to pick them up on Tuesday and is teased about it; he fails to pick them up on Wednesday and is punished again, there's a problem with consistency. Children will be happier and will better develop the "Peaceable fruit of righteousness" if parents will be clear and consistent.

**3. Open parental disagreement about child discipline.** If there is disagreement, parents should discuss the matters behind closed doors. Remember that the Father is the head, and must make sure that all is being done to rear the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

Like fruit, which takes time to ripen rich and mellow, the righteous character of our children must have time to season and grow. The writer of Hebrews teaches us that chastening, done right, will help produce that desirable character.



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# Growth

## Bobby Key

Every church is interested in growth. A number of books have been written to encourage growth. Is it possible that we have failed to realize where growth comes from?

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3:6). The apostle said that God was causing the growth. We may teach but God causes growth. This is a lesson we all need to learn!

It is our responsibility to preach the Word of God to all the world. The gospel must be preached. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but the that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). Paul had planted in Corinth. There can be no increase until men have planted. The greater the planting the greater the increase. Men are converted to Christ only through the preaching of the gospel. All the methods, personal work plans, campaigns, meetings, and promotional gimmicks in the world will not convert the lost unless the gospel is preached. The main duty of the church today is preaching the gospel.

After teaching the lost we are to encourage obedience. The gospel will not aid the sinner unless it is believed and obeyed. After Paul had taught in Corinth, "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). No matter how much planting and watering we do it is still God that causes the growth. To Him belongs all the praise and glory.

The last decade of this century is well underway. The devil and sin are having a field day. In spite of technological progress, we still have every social, economic, political, and environmental problem we ever had. Immorality and illegitimacy seem to increase with each passing year.

We have seen some

of the great television evangelists exposed as hypocrites and frauds. Religion in general has taken a beating. Humanism and evolution have been spurred on by a godless element in society.

The computer age has made possible so many technical advances, and yet has been unable to restore spiritual

values and satisfy the longings of the soul. Evidence of this is seen in our discontentment, boredom, abuse, rapes, murders, and suicides. We have not found the answers in human reasoning.

Christians everywhere need to be praying for a spiritual revival in our nation. We rejoice in the reception the Word of God has enjoyed in

Russia and other former Communist states. The kingdom is spreading in India and countless other nations of the earth. Truth still makes the soul. Since radical and unlearned teachers have been discredited, we must be careful to teach only Truth. Let us be cautious that we do not fall into the pits of these shysters.

The church is well qualified to enter the doors of opportunity that will be opening before us in the coming years. Let's give God a chance! Let's admit our shortcomings and failures, and with renewed zeal and fervent prayer press on to higher ground.

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

## "Jesus Is Coming Soon?"

### Joe E. Galloway

It is no more right to sing error than it is to teach error. Yet, on occasion we hear brethren sing songs in our assemblies that teach error: error that would rightly be condemned if it were taught in our Bible classes or from the pulpit. The song may have a pleasing tune. It may be sung by gospel quartets among us, by college choruses, or at various singings. It may be in some of our hymn books. But if it is unscriptural it should not be sung!

This writer realizes that sometimes a song may contain a statement that, when not properly understood, may only seem to teach error. When one learns the proper application of such a statement he sees that it is truth, and that it can be properly sung. We also realize that "poetic license" may be exercised by a writer so that a word or phrase, which if literally understood would be erroneous, is proper when figuratively understood and used. Even in such instances as these, though, one should not sing that which appears to him to be erroneous until he reaches the proper understanding of its meaning. We must mean what we sing! We are to sing from our hearts (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), and all that we sing must be by Christ's authority (Colossians 3:17).

The song *Jesus Is Coming Soon* is one that definitely teaches error, the error of

dispensational premillennialism. In the first place, it is wrong to affirm that Christ's second coming will be soon (which means "at one" or "in a short time"), for we do not and cannot know this. He may, indeed, come soon. But, he may not come for hundreds of years. No one knows (Matthew 24:36)!

The second verse of this song also teaches that there are "signs" coming to pass by which we can know we are "nearing the end at last." It gives "love of so many cold" and "evils abound" as some of these claimed signs that the end is near. This is the play used by all present-day premillennialists to teach their false doctrine. Most of us know of their past (and also present) date-setting as they have claimed that signs are given in Matthew 24 by which we can know that the end of time is near. Matthew 24:12 does mention *iniquity bounding and the love of many waxing cold*, but Jesus gave them in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem (which was fulfilled in AD 70) and not with regard to his second coming. The overall emphasis of Christ in chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew is that, although there would be signs by which they could know when Jerusalem was about to be destroyed, there will be no such signs by which they could know that the end of the world is near. The premillennialists err on this matter, and this song teaches

such error!

We would wish that those who edit and print our song books would be more careful with reference to the songs they include in them. Yet, as in any other matter, we are responsible for what we sing.

Let's give careful attention to what we sing. Then we can sing with profit as we teach and admonish one another, directing our worship to the Lord!

--218 Pinecrest Drive, Greenville, TN 37743.

**Upcoming  
Words Of Truth  
Lectureship  
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Watch For Details!**

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**A man who was sleeping in his hotel room, had inadvertently left the door open. Some teenage boys noticed the man and decided to play a practical joke. They took smelly limburger cheese and spread some of it on the sleeping man's mustache.**

**Later when the man woke up he crinkled his nose and said, "This room stinks." Then taking his complaint to the management in the lobby he said, "This lobby stinks too!" He demanded a refund for his room, and ran outside. With great disgust he shouted, "The whole world stinks!"**

**The point of course is that while he blamed the world, his problems were actually with him!**

**Sometimes we're like that. Sometimes we dwell on the bad things so long, that the "stink" goes wherever we go. The Lord has the answer for this trouble. Listen to Philippians 4:8 -- "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, and if there be any praise, think on these things."**

# Growing Old Gracefully

**Johnny Ramsey**

In Psalms 92:14 we learn that it is possible to bring forth fruit for God's cause even in old age. One of Satan's greatest ploys is to convince the elderly that they are worthless. However, the most productive moments in our earthly sojourn could be manifested in the sunset years of life. In Luke 2, we read of two senior citizens, Simeon and Anna, who contribute mightily in their later moments on earth. Wisdom and patience and a depth of loving-kindness should be in the spiritual arsenal of the aged that can and will bless the world. How we need to cultivate these virtues possessed by the elderly who often sit in a corner feeling sorry for themselves. Jehovah is not pleased with older Christians who murmur and complain (Philippians 2:14). We tend to exaggerate our problems and minimize our blessings when we are self-centered and seek pity from others rather than being

Christ-centered and encouraging to those about us. Someone has reminded us honestly:

"The older a man gets, the farther he had to walk to school as a boy."

Sadly, some brethren, as they advance in years, become prone to gossip and criticism. James, chapter three, warns of this. Some wit cleverly stated the problem in these classic words:

"We hate to repeat gossip, but what else can we do with it?"

One answer to that query would be to get busy telling others of Jesus and the gospel. Be actively engaged in the pursuit of righteousness (Galatians 6:9-10). May we never forget that the road to success is always under construction! We must continue to grow in the Lord's service every step of the way till we leave this world. God's tomorrow will certainly be better than today but while here in the land of the living we dare not rest on past

laurels but ever press on to greater things.

Younger Christians need to humbly listen to -- and even seek -- the wise counsel of older saints. It is a stern rebuke to the church today that we do not often follow the pattern of Titus 2 wherein

older men and women influence younger Christians in the work of the Lord.

The epistle of I John has tender sentiments from an older saint to his children in the gospel that shows the love, concern and loyalty and

respect that should flow between brethren of all ages. The debt we owe to those who have gone before us should produce deep and genuine gratitude and provide us with those precious memories we sing about!

## "Why Am I Here?"

**Johnny Ramsey**

There is no way to answer the riddle of our earthly sojourn apart from Christianity. We have all wondered, at times, as to why we are here and where we are going. James tells us that our life is but "a vapor that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Peter informs us that those who would love life and see good days must "refrain their tongues from evil." Paul clearly stated: "For me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). The real purpose of living is to live for Jesus. Our Savior beautifully expressed this

thought in John 10:10.

"I am come that they might have life and that they might it more abundantly."

The word purpose suggests dedication, decision, conviction and planning. The religion of our Redeemer provides all of these items; it gives substance to living. Just as Daniel "purposed in his heart not to defile himself" (Daniel 1:8), so does Christianity cause us to cleave to the Lord "with purpose of heart" (Acts 11:23). A statement from Moses is appropriate at this point in our discussion.

"It is your life to set your

heart upon all my law and to teach your children to observe all my commandments" (Deuteronomy 32:46).

We shall not take out of this life any of our accumulated wealth or fame but only the influence of a righteous life. When we stand before our Maker in the last great day it will be of the highest import how we lived while upon the earth. If you are not a Christian you lack real incentive for living!

Let Us All Study the Bible More!

## Pride

Continued From Page 2

of sin, his attitude would be more appropriate if he would fall upon his knees and pray, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." His spiritual maturity would be revealed for him to "confess his faults" (James 5:16), and his humility would be properly expressed for him to go to his brother that has ought against him (Matthew 5:21-24).

Satan finds a way to take faithful brethren to lofty heights; he places them up on a high mountain to look down upon the rest of humanity. He tells them of the fortune they can make, the recognition they can receive and the fame that will be theirs (Matthew 4:8-10). If they stay up on that mountain, the only company they will have is Satan and his helpers; but when they come down to the servants' quarters and work in the trenches, they have Christ and the saved there working with them (John 13:3-17).

--1705 Starview Drive, Salem, VA 24153.

## Why You Should Not Belong To "The Campbellite Church"

Continued From Page 1

the Lord; and, if to enforce it, I say or write that the apostolic churches met weekly, do you say it is only my opinion! If I say that Christians ought to be more conformed to the spirit and behavior of the Christian religion, and their practice must, if approved by the Lord, be such as the Volume requires, do you say, 'Why disturb the peace of the church with such an opinion?' If I say that immersion and not sprinkling is the action which Christ enjoined, do you say that this is only my opinion, and that I ought not to disturb the peace of society with such an opinion? . . . Call not the weekly meeting of the disciples Campbellism; call not 'immersion for the remission of sins' Campbellism; call not

immersion, rather than sprinkling, Agag; call not fellowship of the saints, or weekly contributions for the poor saints, widows, and orphans, Campbellism. . . Every Campbellism, every invention of mine which you will point out to me, I will help you to burn, or drown, or exile, as the case may require. I will offer a premium to any man or woman who will produce one instance where ever I made a Campbellism, an opinion of mine, a bone of controversy, a term of communion, or shut out of a church or meeting house any one for not honoring an opinion of mine."

If "the Campbellite church" does actually exist you should not belong to it. You should instead belong to the church you can read about in the

Bible, and that is the body of Christ or the Lord's Church.

If you will do what those did in the New Testament to get into the church of Christ, you will get into the same church they were in. To be in that church is the same, in the New Testament, as being a Christian or a child of God. You can get into that church by believing in Christ as God's only begotten Son, by then turning from your sins in repentance, confessing your faith in Christ and being baptized into Christ or into His body, His church (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:36-47; Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 1:18; 3:15).

Study the scriptures herein cited. If we can be of any assistance to you in your becoming a Christian, please contact us.

## The Christian . . .

. . . is slow to lose patience and quick to be gracious.

. . . looks for a way to be constructive, even when provoked.

. . . refrains from trying to impress others with his own importance.

. . . practices good manners.

. . . is not "touchy," even when insulted.

. . . thinks the best -- not the worst of others.

. . . is wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove in dealing with others.

. . . does not gloat over the wickedness of other people.

Above all else, a Christian exhibits the love of Christ in his heart and life.

Via Liberty, MO

**Be A  
Words Of  
Truth  
Subscriber**

April 8, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Three Ingredients To Controlling Stress, Part I
- The Lower Lights
- What Law Are We Under?
- "New World Translation" And II Peter 3:10
- Why Captivity?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Are You Looking For A Job?

Volume 30 Number 15  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 2

## Baptism Is Necessary

**Bobby Key**

Most of our religious neighbors demand baptism before church membership; however they fight us when we teach that baptism is essential to salvation. Most churches in your community do not believe baptism is for remission of sins, that baptism puts one into Christ, and that baptism has one thing to do with your salvation. Just how important is baptism?

Baptism puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). Man does not believe into Christ; neither does he repent into Christ; rather he is baptized into Christ. Salvation is in Christ (II Timothy 2:10). All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Since one enters Christ by water baptism, is baptism really necessary?

Baptism puts us in the one body (I Corinthians 12:13). Christ is the saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23). Every person on earth must be in the one body, which is the church (Colossians 1:24) to be saved. Since we are baptized into one body (that which Jesus saves), is baptism necessary?

Baptism is commanded by God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:48). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him (Hebrews 5:9). One cannot ignore the commands of God and be saved (Matthew 7:21-22; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Since baptism is a command of God

and one must obey the commands of God to be

saved, is baptism really necessary?

--324 17th S.W., Miami, OK 74354.

## What Is The Gospel? (No. 1)

**Basil Overton**

Are the commands in the New Testament that one must obey to become a Christian a part of the gospel?

The word gospel was originally goodspell which meant good tale, or story. The Greek word found often in the Greek New Testament that means good news is translated gospel.

The gospel of Christ is indeed a good story, or good news.

**What Gospel Was Preached To Abraham?**

"And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8).

Obviously the gospel that was preached to Abraham by God was the promise God made to him when he said "in thee shall all nations be blessed." That was good news about what was to come, and it was finally fulfilled in Jesus Christ the seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16).

**What Gospel Did Jesus Preach?**

Jesus preached the gospel, or the good news that the kingdom of God (his church) was soon to be established

(Mark 1:14, 15).

Often, Jesus spoke about that kingdom before it actually was established as though it was already established. He did this in many parables to teach various principles, features, and aspects of that kingdom, or church.

**The Death, Burial, And Resurrection of Jesus**

In order to preach the gospel we must preach the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul identified these facts as being the gospel he preached (I Corinthians 15:1-4). However this does not mean that in preaching the gospel Paul just preached the basic facts that Jesus was put to death, was buried, and was raised from the dead. This means that without these facts nothing else preached would be of any value. But, we must preach many other things to truly preach the good news of Christ, or in order to preach the gospel!

**Beginning At Jerusalem**

"And said unto them, 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).

The prophet Isaiah foretold this beginning of the preaching in Christ's name in Isaiah 2:1-3.

The complete gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ was not preached until after these facts occurred. On the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection the Holy Spirit guided Peter to preach repentance and remission of sins for the first time upon the authority, or the name of the resurrected Christ!

Peter preached repentance and remission of sins upon the name or authority of his risen Lord when he told convicted sinners, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

In this verse is from the Greek preposition epi which is also translated upon.

Does one preach the gospel when he preaches to sinners that they must repent? Of course he does! Peter preached repentance and remission of sins on Pentecost.

Does one preach the gospel when he preaches that men are to be baptized upon the authority of Jesus Christ? Of

course he does! In preaching remission of sins, Peter also preached baptism for remission of sins.

Is preaching that people are to confess Jesus as Lord before being baptized included in preaching the gospel? Of course it is.

Paul showed that if Christ were in the deep or were dead we would not have to descend there in order to have the word or message we need. He also affirmed we do not have to ascend to heaven and bring Christ down in order to have the message we need (Romans 10:6, 7).

Then Paul strongly affirmed that the word or message we need is near us, and it is "the word of faith which we preach; 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" (Romans 10:8, 9). This proves beyond question that preaching the word of faith, or the gospel, includes preaching that in order to be saved one must confess Jesus as Lord!

Obviously, this does not mean that confessing Jesus as Lord is the only thing one must do to be saved or to

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Three Ingredients To Controlling Stress, Part I

Glenn Colley

Probably the majority of Christians would admit to living a stressful life. As we travel on the freeway of 90's living we may feel compelled to keep the popular pace or be left behind.

Perhaps more than any time in history Christians miss many blessings offered in Christ, simply due to their failure to take advantage of these blessings. One example of this concerns stress reduction.

It should be obvious to Bible students that Jesus relieves the stress brought on by sin. He does so by teaching us the right way to live, that we should repent from sin, and then offers us redemption and forgiveness. But what about those stresses not tied to sin, but simply tied to daily living?

In Philippians four, Paul gives Christians three very specific instructions to live by, and to control that awful

stress. He concludes his instructions by writing, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." All 90's Christians should read and practice this amazing prescription from the Great Physician, Christ (Philippians 4:4-7).

First, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (vs. 4). Paul used the "rejoice" thought in every chapter of Philippians 1:18, 2:17, 3:1, 4:4. We rejoice in the character, the law, the government, the grace, and the promises of our Lord. We rejoice in the person of Jesus. We rejoice in our Lord always; That is, under all conditions. We may wonder, "but can I rejoice in Him in the hard times -- times of financial reversals, of child-rearing problems, of prolonged sickness, of the heart-rending loss of loved ones?" Yes! Always! One does not have to be laughing

to rejoice in the Lord. Sometimes we rejoice in Him through tears of sadness. The key is that we don't rejoice in Him because of these hard times, we rather rejoice in spite of these hard times. Our world changes about us often. Jesus never changes (Hebrews 13:8).

People who find their greatest joy in possessions are going to find it difficult to be content when those possessions, for whatever reason, vanish. The first essential to healthy Christian contentment is learning how to rejoice in the Lord (Colossians 3:1, 2).

Why shouldn't the Christian be a contented person? If everything else changes, the Lord does not change. Spend time today and every day studying the word of our Lord, and pondering His teachings. Then enjoy, even in the hard days, the fact that we can rejoice in the Lord.

# What Law Are We Under?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"What spiritual law are we under now? Are we still under the Ten Commandments?"

This is an excellent question. Please study the following passages carefully.

1. Dead to the law. "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become *dead to the law* through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Romans 7:2, 4).

•According to this verse, we have become *dead to WHAT?*

2. Discharged from the law. "But now we have been *delivered (discharged ASV)* from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).

•According to this verse, have we been *delivered/discharged/released from the law?*

•Since we have been released from the law, should we continue to serve it? Are we still responsible to it?

•Are we currently under 1) the rule of England (British empire), or 2) the Constitution? Since the Constitution is now in effect, should we serve a previous rule/law which is no longer binding in this country? Certainly not. This of course does not mean that principles cannot be carried from one law to the next.

3. Law said, "You shall not covet." "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless *the law had said, 'You shall not covet'*" (Romans 7:7).

•Which law contained the commandment, "You shall not covet?" The old, then the new.

Therefore: We have DIED TO and have been DISCHARGED FROM the law which said, "You shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17) i.e. the Law of Moses (including the Ten Commandments); the New Testament of Christ is NOW spiritually binding (Hebrews 8:6-13).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## The Lower Lights

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.

"Let the lower lights be burning; send a gleam across the wave. Some poor fainting, struggling seaman you may rescue, you may save." P. P. Bliss

We are the lower lights. Christ is the lighthouse. The lower lights are placed along the shoreline to direct the ships toward the harbor. The lighthouse provides the direction, while the lower lights show the path to safety.

The sentiments of this beautiful song should affect each of us. "Brightly beams our Father's mercy From His

lighthouse evermore, But to us He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore." The beautiful beams of mercy penetrated the darkness of sin as Christ, the Son of God, revealed to man the way home (Luke 1:79). As we strive to reflect His image (I Peter 2:21), we must recognize our position in directing lost souls in from the troubled sea (Colossians 1:28). If the lower lights fail, then the ships will run aground. If we fail to keep the lower lights of Christianity burning, the man may see the lighthouse, Christ, but

knowing Christ does not get one to the safe harbor (James 2:19).

Knowing Christ, the Lighthouse (John 8:12), is a very important aspect, and it should be the first thing a troubled sinner searches for. He must then be led to the safe harbor by the lower lights and obedience (I John 5:1-4). Let's make sure the lower lights are burning every day!

--West Side Church of Christ, 1705 Starview Drive, Salem, VA 24153.

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## "New World Translation" And II Peter 3:10

**Jesse Whitlock**  
 Judge Rutherford, founder of Jehovah's Witnesses, attempted to explain away II Peter 3:10 by saying that . . . the apostle is here using symbolic language." The passage states that ". . . THE EARTH AND THE WORKS THAT ARE THEREIN SHALL BE BURNED UP." [Emphasis mine - JLW]. The New World Translation (NWT) has corrupted the text to read, "Yet Jehovah's day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and the earth and the works in it will be discovered." [Emphasis mine - JLW]. Now let me say that there is a world of difference in a thing being burned up and a thing being discovered! Which had you rather hear: "Our dinner just got burned up?" or "Our dinner was just discovered!"?

I recall the first time that I read this perversion of God's Word in II Peter 3. The words that immediately came to my mind were the words recorded in Isaiah 8:20, "TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY! IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, SURELY THERE IS NO MORNING FOR THEM."

Later it dawned upon me that this is the same error made by those who cling to the A.D. 70 heresy introduced from denominationalism to the Lord's church by Max R. King. Jehovah's Witnesses and the followers of Max King both have made the same error of judgment as pertains to II Peter 3.

The words "burned up" are taken from the Greek *Katakaio* which means "to burn up, to consume with fire." The Greek for "discovered" is *Katanoeo*. The scholars have stated, ". . . discovered is strange and improbable" (Thayer). Also, ". . . discovered obviously makes utter nonsense of the place" (Burgon). The evidence is highly in deference to "burned up."

The NWT, like the current A.D. 70 heresy, is not even consistent. The same Greek phrase is used elsewhere in the Scripture. Matthew 3:12, ". . . but the chaff he will burn up with fire . . ." (NWT). Revelation 8:7, ". . . A third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees was burned up, and all the green vegetation was burned up . . ." (NWT). [All emphasis mine - JLW]. Why would they

translate correctly in these four instances and then incorrectly in the only other occurrence of the phrase? - Because II Peter 3:10 stands diametrically opposed to Jehovah's Witness' doctrine. This same place also stands diametrically opposed to the A.D. 70 error.

Not only is the NWT inconsistent in its translation (Or mistranslation!) - it also contradicts itself on this very

matter. Consider the wording of Hebrews 1:10 in the NWT: ". . . You at the beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are the works of your hands, they themselves will perish . . ." [Emphasis mine - JLW]. Then, within the context itself notice II Peter 3:7 in the NWT: ". . . by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now stored up for fire . . ." [Emphasis

mine - JLW]. Shades of contradiction -- what shall it be? The A.D. 70 errorists are in league with the doctrine of Jehovah's Witnesses. Paul warned in I Corinthians 15:33, "BE NOT DECEIVED. EVIL COMPANIONSHIPS CORRUPT GOOD MORALS." --Ardmore, Oklahoma.

## Why Captivity?

**Johnny Ramsey**

One of the major, epochal points in the Old Testament is the seventy year period wherein God's people were in bondage in Babylon. Several passages tell us exactly why Judah deserved such punishment and how Jehovah used Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans to subdue a disobedient and ungrateful people. Those seven decades were nothing short of tragic because they reflect the saga of folk who lived beneath their privileges who failed miserably to glorify their Maker. Godliness was not the top priority of Judah so they lived to see the tears of Jeremiah, the challenge of Habakkuk, the fiery preaching of Ezekiel and the deep sincerity of Daniel before they ever learned their lesson and a remnant turned back to God. Israel before them -- a century earlier -- "had made lies their refuge" (Isaiah 28:15) and Judah had not learned any better. In the Apocrypha we find this sterling comment from I Esdra:

**"Great is truth and mighty above all things."**

If only Zephaniah's contemporaries had learned that maxim instead of "rising early to corrupt all their doings" (Zephaniah 3:7). Jehovah had promised as far back as Joshua's farewell address that bondage awaited those who pursued the road of rejection of truth (Joshua 23:12). Wycliffe was accurate indeed when he wrote:

**"In the end, truth will conquer."**

When the Israelites in the wilderness begged for a captain to lead them back to Egypt they set in motion an apostasy that eventually cried:

"Give us a king that we may be like the nations round about us."

Desiring to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11) they forsook the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16), removed the landmarks of liberty (Hosea 5:10) and departed from the bulwarks of righteousness. Captivity was the natural result of their folly! Thomas Jefferson brilliantly wrote these words:

"The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots."

Truth crushed to earth will rise again. However, the decline of centuries demanded seventy years of banishment to purify the faithful penitents prior to restoration of Abraham's seed under Ezra and Nehemiah following captivity. There is a parallel today. We must convict men of sin, bring them to repentance, purge iniquity from the camp and then, yes, only then, can the sunlight of gospel peace abound. Lenin was clever but incorrect when he said:

**"Liberty is so precious it must be rationed."**

Jesus Christ countered that error long ago when, in John 8:36, He made it clear that truth makes us free indeed!

Psalms 126 vividly and beautifully speaks of the smothering nature of bondage

that eventually gives way to joyous reaping for people who "sowed in tears." Unable to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalm 137:4) they now break forth a splendid anthem of praise for the God who set them free!

Sin has a stifling effect upon broken hearts but Jesus came to seek and save the lost. When the shackles of iniquity and shame seem absolutely unbearable the Savior comes to set us free. James Rowe pungently wrote a gospel song on this theme:

"Jesus the Lord laid His glory aside,

Sinners to save and make whole,

Freely He died our transgressions to bide,

What is He worth to your

soul?

He died on the tree for you and for me,

What is He worth to your soul?"

The Bible clearly gives us the precise reasons Judah went into Babylonian Captivity. They are the very same points that cause people to be in bondage to Satan today. Notice the discernable parallel:

(1) Ezekiel 39:23 - Because of Iniquity

(2) Isaiah 5:13 - Because of Ignorance

(3) Jeremiah 7:23-28 - Because of Arrogance

(4) Judges 2 - Because of Idolatry

(5) II Chronicles 36 - Because of Rebellion to the Word

(6) Ezekiel 36 - Because of

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**Jimmy Stewart is my favorite actor. In the movie Shenandoah he played the father of a Southern family in the grips of the Civil War. In one scene he sits at the dinner table with his children and offers this interesting prayer: "Lord, we worked hard to clear the stumps and till the land, plant the seed, cultivate the crops and harvest the grain. We did all the work and provided all the labor, and we wouldn't have this meal if we hadn't -- but we thank You anyway."**

**How easy it is to forget, or just plain fail to see that without God, even the harvest would be impossible. Take from us the daily blessings of God and we quickly die. Deuteronomy 8:18 says, "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who is giving you power to make wealth." Without the Lord's help, even the smallest task would be impossible! The Apostle Paul would sum it up this way, "In every thing give thanks."**

# Are You Looking For A Job?

## Allen Webster

During these hard economic times, unemployment is a real concern. Thousands wonder how they will feed and clothe their families, meet their indebtedness, and educate their children. Politicians talk often of creating jobs and helping retrain those who have been displaced. The classifieds are the most often read part of the paper for a large segment of society.

Wouldn't it be nice to live in a state with 0% unemployment -- a place where everybody who wanted a job, had a job! There is such a state, but it is not one of the United States. It is not even a communist-controlled state. It is the state of "no condemnation" (Romans 8:1), the kingdom of heaven, the church of Christ.

We have plenty of jobs! There are more job openings than we can fill. These jobs pay well, have great retirement plans, the working conditions are more than adequate, and your co-workers are the salt of the earth. Interested? Take a look at the "Christian Classifieds." Here are some of the job openings available at the present time.

**Farmer.** We are always on the lookout for a good seed-sower. No society can survive without farmers. The "Christian community" is the same -- it needs lots of farmers.

Workers will be expected to sow the seed of the Gospel (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of men. You will find some soil is too hard to grow a crop (some refuse to listen to the Gospel) and some is too shallow (some quit when the sun of persecution rises). You will lose some crops to thorns (the cares and pleasures of life, the deceitfulness of riches).

But when you do make a crop, what a pay-off (Matthew 16:26)! The rewards of finding good soil will bring you great happiness (Luke 8:9-15). This job has a special incentive: God Himself has promised to multiply your

seed sown (II Corinthians 9:10).

The farmer may plant his crop in the tender minds of children in Bible classes, he may find good soil among his own family members, or he may notice interested listeners among his co-workers and neighbors. This is a tremendously wide-open field (pun intended). Unlimited positions available.

**Nurse.** We have available positions for those interested in nursing the sick. This requires one who will treat young Christians as newborn babes and help them grow strong (I Peter 2:2). Paul was gentle among the Thessalonians, as a nurse cherishing her children (I Thessalonians 2:7).

One will be expected to restore the broken bones of the body (individual Christians make up the body of Christ, I Corinthians 12). If one of the community is overtaken in a fault, you will be expected to restore him (Galatians 6:1). *Restore* here is the word for setting a bone and indicates the carefulness with which one would go about helping this person. One coming back who has quit the church needs tenderness and love. It also shows that one considering being a nurse must realize the serious condition of those who fall away (we would not leave a broken bone unattended). This position is very rewarding, but sometimes frustrating. Special person required.

**Athlete.** There are positions available for those who are athletically inclined. We need *racers* in our community. "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a crowd of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and *let us run with patience the race that is set before us*" (Hebrews 12:1).

We also need boxers (I Corinthians 9:26) and wrestlers (Ephesians 6:12). Your mentor will be the Apostle Paul who fought against the wiles of the devil

and spiritual wickedness in high places.

This requires strength and good stamina. You must possess an ability to use offensive and defensive weapons (sword, shield) Equipment provided.

**Soldier.** We are seeking to enlist several able bodied men into the armed forces division of the state. The Gospel needs to be defended against its enemies (Philippians 3:18; Jude 3). "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life . . ." (I Timothy 6:12).

Applicants must be willing to endure hardness (II Timothy 2:3), remain aloof from the affairs of his life (II Timothy 2:4), have no permanent home (Hebrews 11:9, 10, 16), and give total obedience to the Captain (Hebrews 2:10; 5:8, 9). We are looking for a "few good men." Are you willing to take the challenge?

**Teacher.** We are in dire need of teachers! Parents especially need to consider this field (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; 11:19; Ephesians 6:4). Preachers, church leaders, disciples, and soul winners are also prime candidates (Ephesians 4:11; Matthew 28:19; Titus 2:3).

Are you qualified? You must have a working knowledge of first principles, doctrinal positions, moral precepts, and

general Bible facts (Hebrews 5:12-14). Your personality must be suited to this field as well. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. . . ." (II Timothy 2:24, 25).

This is a particularly rewarding field. Children of all ages are constantly in need of instruction (thirsty for knowledge, but a bit rowdy).

There is an adult-teaching program as well.

Do you need a job? We would like you to "fill out an application" by becoming a citizen of the kingdom. This is done by believing in its King (John 3:16), changing your lifestyle to fit its rules (Luke 13:3), and being immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). Upon this, you can be immediately employed!

## Why Captivity?

Continued From Page 3

### Profanity

(7) Psalms 78 - Because of Ingratitude and Disobedience

Both Israel and Judah trusted in the wrong things, aped the heathen nations, mocked the prophets of God and became very poor, insincere worshippers (Amos 5:20-27).

Today, in our age of materialism, secularism, humanism and existentialism we are "sitting ducks" -- ripe for apostasy of the deepest sort. It will do no good to deny the evident facts of our society and brush these matters aside and label those who tell the truth as "prophets of doom." Real students of the Bible, history and human nature know we stand on the brink of bondage once again. The only way to avert captivity and truly be free to uphold the banner of the Lord is to return to the solid ground of Bible authority, exalting the Savior (Colossians 3:17) and imbibing richly of the

essence of Christianity as reflected in Titus 2:12:

**"Live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."**

The New Testament tells us how to avoid domination by the Devil and to participate in the abundant life Christ provides (John 10:10).

(1) Bring every thought under the Lord's rule - II Corinthians 10:5.

(2) Continue in the blessed word of God - John 8:32.

(3) Surrender our conduct to Him - Romans 6:16.

(4) Never use our liberty as license - Galatians 5:13.

(5) Do not listen to the Libertines - II Peter 2:19.

(6) Grow in the knowledge of God's will - II Peter 3:18.

(7) Think on matters that produce purity - Philippians 4:8.

If we would be free from the burden of sin we must ever walk in the light our Redeemer brings!

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## What Is The Gospel? (No. 1)

Continued From Page 1

become a Christian, because in the same verse Paul states another condition of being saved and that is believing God has raised Christ from the dead.

Paul also taught in Romans that baptism is necessary to one's getting into Christ where salvation is (Romans 6:3, 4).

This all means that included in preaching the gospel is

preaching that instructs lost sinners how to become Christians!

If one argues that preaching the gospel which means good news just means preaching the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he should be reminded that it is also mighty good news to learn how to get rid of our sins!

April 15, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Three Ingredients To Controlling Stress, Part 2
- More Sex Education?
- Is The Gift Of Salvation Unconditional?
- What Is The Gospel No. 2
- Accept Mistreatment
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 30 Number 16  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words C Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- Act

## Which, Among Four, Are You?

Neal Pollard

Recently, a brother related to me the words of an old song. One verse goes,

There are many people who say they are Christians,

And live like Christians on the "Sabbath Day"

But on Monday morning, as they start their workin',

They'll fight their neighbor all along the way.

If you don't love your neighbor, you don't love God!

The message of the song is quite clear. As John says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20).

A discreet scribe, recognizing the greatness of Christ, said unto Him, "For there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:32-33). This scribe seems to have understood the heart and will of God better than a certain lawyer, who tempted Jesus on one occasion. The lawyer apparently feigned interest in eternal life to trap our Lord (cf. Luke 10:25).

Jesus pointed this lawyer to the very place in the old law which the seemingly honest scribe had gone. The lawyer acknowledged, to inherit eternal

life, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

Plain, evident, gospel truth did not satisfy the lawyer. "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?" Do you think this man loved his neighbor? Was he anxious to find "neighbors" for whom he could manifest great acts of unselfish love? Was he concerned with Jesus' answer, or was he determined to get the best of Him?

Jesus tells a story centering around misfortune. This is proper, for one learns who his friends are in adversity rather than in prosperity. Each person or group of people about whom Jesus speaks represents different facets of hardship.

**SOME PEOPLE INITIATE HARDSHIP.** On this road waited thieves. They were ready, even eager, to inflict pain on their victim and leave him bruised and battered. They had no use for the golden rule, no regard for the rights of individual, and no respect for the feelings of anyone but themselves.

How many people live to "cut down" or "get the best of" another? Have you ever met anyone who seemed to enjoy fracturing the feelings of others? Paul must have known a few, for he warns the Galatians, "But if you bite and devour one another, be careful not to be

consumed by one another" (Galatians 5:15). Some wag a tongue set on fire by hell, with which they attempt to bless God while cursing men (cf. James 3:6, 9). There are too many wrathful men in this world who stir up strife (cf. Proverbs 15:18). Those who create hardship for others are of kindred spirit with the railing, implacable, fierce, and treacherous persons about whom Paul warns Timothy (II Timothy 3:1-9).

**SOME PEOPLE IGNORE HARDSHIP.** A priest and a Levite, though moral and seemingly religious, saw a bleeding man (perhaps a Jewish brother) half dead in a ditch. Understand, Christ did not mention their position and occupation because He wished to undermine religion. Suggesting that would be sacrilegious. Nonetheless, Jesus exposes some who profess to be religious, but whose performance preaches their partiality toward indifference and uninvolvedness.

Some who have been washed in the Lamb's blood are content to leave the world floundering and flinching in the pit of sin, wounded and in need of aid. There are Christians who appear to be callous toward their brethren in need. All around the Christian lie the shut in, the sick, the sinner, and the sad. Dare he ignore them?

**SOME PEOPLE ELIMINATE HARDSHIP.** The hero of Christ's story is a

compassionate (33), caring (34), and conscientious (35) man. A certain Samaritan aided this victim of hardship. He had nothing to gain by being kind, yet he knew he was doing right.

Even the world applauds "a good Samaritan." Anyone can speak a soft answer (cf. Proverbs 15:1), speak always with grace (cf. Colossians 4:6), and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). We eliminate hardship when we seek the good and welfare of others.

**ALL PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HARDSHIP.** At one time or another, all of us are going to be

the person in the ditch. Problems are part of the human experience. Temptation strips us. Sorrow wounds us. Injustice and Evil leave us for dead.

Knowing how we feel in hardship, how will we go through life? Surely, we will not make life difficult for others. Neither will we ignore the hurts and needs of our fellow man. Let us live our religion. Like the good Samaritan, let us start looking in the ditches of hardship along the road of life. In so doing, we find favor with our Lord (Luke 10:37).

## Will Christ Be At The Prom This Year?

Dale Jenkins

It's great to be young and full of life. Our youth can give something to God that we can't. In fact they are the only ones who can. They have the opportunity to give a lifetime of service to the Messiah. Sometimes as we grow older we only remember the joys of our teen years and forget that it is a time of frustration, decision and pressure for those who choose to do right.

Among the decisions that many will be making is whether or not to attend the prom. Before I go much further let me mention several things. In all likelihood for most of you the decision was made a long time ago. I hope even if your decision was to attend that

you'll read on anyway. For others reading the decision was made for them by their parents, (I personally am thankful for parents who shielded me from having to make some difficult decisions until I was old enough to handle them). I hope you too will read on. We are also aware that even the mention of the prom in a negative sense will send some foaming at the mouth angry at the old corny idea that in our sophisticated society one should even present such an idea. For many the battle lines are already drawn, and Jesus himself could not change their minds. I hope you're mature enough, Christian enough and have enough desire

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Three Ingredients To Controlling Stress, Part 2

Glenn Colley

The text for this little series is Philippians 4:4-7. In this passage Paul offers Christians a priceless commodity, worth more than rubies and gold: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Only a fool would choose material possessions over the peace of God. Last week we considered the first of three instructions from this text, "Rejoice in the Lord always." The second instruction is, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5).

The Greek word for "moderation," according to Thayer, means, "what's reasonable; equitable, fair, mild, gentle." It is no surprise then that in I Timothy 3:3 the word is translated "Patient." In Titus 3:2 and in James 3:17 it is translated "gentle," and in II

Corinthians 10:1 it is translated "gentleness."

Do I work to live a balanced life, seeking to be equitable, fair, mild, and gentle to those about me? This word conveys the picture of one who is easily approached and consistent, one whose heart is of kindness and goodness. Paul says that it should be "known unto all men." The relevance to stress reduction rings clear and practical. When I treat all people around me with Christian integrity and gentleness, I can sleep at night. The natural by-product of this characteristic is calmness. However, when I walk the tight-rope of shady deals, questionable business transactions, and the speaking of sharp prideful words, I'm asking for compounded stress. Where is the peace found in that life?

Philippians 2:2-4 says, "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same

love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Colossians 3:12, 13 says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

Rejoice in the Lord always. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Next week we will consider the third ingredient for stress reduction: "Be careful for nothing."

## More Sex Education?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"Shouldn't more sex education be taught in our schools? If our young people were taught the consequences and dangers of their actions, don't you think pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases would be reduced?"

Proper sex education (anatomy/reproduction), should be taught provided it is accompanied by a discussion of morality and responsibility. Unfortunately, I fear the latter is often divorced from the classroom.

1. The modern concept of "sex education" is part of the problem -- not part of the solution. While "teenagers

today are sexually better informed than at any time in human history," they have become not LESS but much MORE sexually active. Consider:

- Before sex education programs were introduced to the American public school system in the 1970's, teenage pregnancy was declining.<sup>2</sup>

- Since sex education programs were introduced in the 1970's, unwed pregnancies have increased 87 percent among teenagers ages 18-19.<sup>3</sup>

- Since 1970, the federal government has spent over \$2 billion to promote the "safe sex" message. After 24 years and \$2 billion, some 57 percent of sexually active

teens never use contraceptives during intercourse. Of the remaining 43 percent, many use them improperly or only occasionally.<sup>4</sup>

- In America 3,000 adolescents become pregnant each day. That's a million a year.<sup>5</sup>

- Teenagers ages 15-19 lead the nation in the number of cases of gonorrhea, and the same is true for other sexually transmitted diseases except AIDS.<sup>6</sup>

- Today 7,742 teenagers will become sexually active.<sup>7</sup>

2. It is inconsistent to suggest that more "sex education" will result in less sexual activity. As Coleen Kelly Mast (a former school

Continued On Page 4

## Is The Gift Of Salvation Unconditional?

Tom Childs

Due to the nature of the preceding question, as it pertains to the salvation of our souls, it is one of primary importance. This Bible question should be handled objectively, honestly and from a Biblical perspective. What does God, through His inspired, written message have to say about receiving His gift of salvation?

First, we begin by citing one of the most familiar passages of Scripture which reads: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). What prompted God to do such a remarkable thing? It is readily conceded that we did absolutely nothing of worth to so motivate him. But rather, God "gave his only begotten Son" by his personal volition which grew out of his transcending love for fallen man (Romans 5:8).

Yet, is there not a real element of condition expressed within the same passage? We look once more at the clause "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. . . ." While God sent his Son to die for every man (II Corinthians 5:15), those in the state of unbelief remain under God's condemnation (John 3:18; Cf. John 1:11-13; I John 5:10-13).

Is salvation to be realized by all upon the basis of God's grace alone and apart from any condition? God says, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God,

and he shall be my son. 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 21:7, 8). Refer as well to Romans 1:20-32 and Galatians 5:19, 21. This is what God says as a warning to each of us. What will become of the ungodly? God says that they will be rewarded according to their works. May we indulge in our fleshly desires and expect God to wink at us when we stand before him? (Romans 2:4-11; Acts 10:34, 34; Romans 8:1-6ff). God calls upon all men to repent of their evil ways. When and where has God suggested the intent to save the impenitent along with the penitent? (Luke 13:3).

The message of the 66 books of the Bible is centered in Christ. The Old testament prophesied that Christ would come and rescue us from sin. The Apostle John writes: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (I John 4:14).

Does the inspired Word of God teach man that he, on a universal basis, will be saved by virtue of the gift of Jesus' life alone? Although many will answer in the affirmative, with love and respect we must disagree.

The truth is of God. Spiritual truth is that which liberates; but

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# What Is The Gospel No. 2

**Basil Overton**

In a previous lesson I presented a number of things included in the gospel or the good news by which we are saved. There follows some other matters that are in the gospel of the New Testament, and must therefore be included in preaching the gospel.

1. The gospel contains warnings. Sometimes, a warning can be good news! If one is driving his car in fog and a bridge is out on the road, it would be good news to him if one warns him about the missing bridge!

Even so, preaching the good news, the gospel, includes warning. Paul said so when he wrote of Christ and said "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom . . ." (Colossians 1:28). In preaching Christ we must warn people about the missing bridge, so to speak! We must tell them of the doom and destruction that awaits the lost. It is good news for them to learn to avoid this doom!

2. Preaching the gospel includes preaching about the kingdom which is the church. When Philip preached Christ, he preached things concerning the kingdom of God and the name, or authority of Jesus (Acts 8:12). Included in those things which he preached concerning the kingdom of God (the church) must have been his preaching to them how Jesus said that one must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter that kingdom (John 3:5). I say this because Luke says men and women who heard Philip were baptized! This means they were born of water and the Spirit and entered the kingdom of God which is the church we read about in the New Testament!

3. One preaches the gospel when he preaches for people to give their money in the work of the Lord. I say this because Paul said that some Christians who gave to help in the work of the Lord were obedient to the gospel! (II Corinthians 9:13). The gospel includes the good news of how giving is a great

blessing, as our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

4. Preaching the gospel includes preaching the moral standard of the gospel. "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless, and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (I Timothy 1:8-11).

It is obvious that the foregoing teaches that the heinous sins listed are contrary to sound doctrine (healthy teaching) according to the glorious gospel of God! This has to mean that some things can be determined to be contrary to sound doctrine on the basis of what is taught in the glorious gospel! This all means that Paul here included in the gospel the standard of moral conduct which he calls "the law" in verses 8 and 9. Obviously he does not mean the law of Moses because he equates what he calls the law with sound doctrine or the glorious gospel.

This all means that the gospel of our blessed God includes a code of moral conduct which is violated when people commit murder, fornication (whoremongers in the text), homosexual acts ("defile themselves with mankind" in the text) or any of the other sins and crimes in the text cited, or "any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

On the basis of the foregoing obvious truth, we can correctly conclude that one is preaching the gospel when he preaches proper moral conduct and reproves people for doing things that are contrary to the gospel! No doubt this is one thing included in Paul's admonition to Timothy where

he wrote, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and 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 4:2, 3).

The foregoing makes it clear that in preaching the word one must exhort, or encourage people in their service to God. However, it also clearly teaches that in preaching the word one must rebuke and reprove. This means that in preaching the word, which is the same as preaching the gospel, one must show that some conduct violates the standard of conduct in the gospel.

5. When people have heard the gospel, they should be urgent about being baptized in water! Why?

The Bible says Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36). In the very next verse the sacred record says that Philip and the eunuch came to a certain water, and the eunuch wanted to be baptized in it! Why? He had heard Philip preach Jesus! That is why!

Luke's saying Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch just means he preached the gospel to him. In preaching the gospel to him he obviously preached the good news concerning Jesus Christ. He must have told the eunuch many details about the Lord Jesus Christ. He obviously told him about his birth, his perfect life, his awful death, his burial, his resurrection, and his ascension. In preaching Jesus, Philip also told him the good news of how one can be saved from his sins! He must have told him that Jesus said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16) because immediately after the eunuch heard Philip preach Jesus he was anxious to be baptized in water!

Yes, Philip included in his preaching the gospel the good news of how one can be saved from his sins by being baptized in water upon the authority of Jesus Christ!

6. The commands are a part of

the gospel too.

If one says the commands of the gospel are not a part of the gospel, he is badly mistaken. If the commands of the gospel are not part of the gospel, why call them commands of the gospel? Furthermore, if the commands of the gospel are not part of the gospel, then one cannot obey the gospel, because the only part of the gospel one can obey are its commands!

But if one cannot obey the gospel, he cannot do what the New Testament says he must do in order to have his sins forgiven and in order to avoid eternal damnation! (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; I Peter

4:17).

**Conclusion**

We must be careful not to define the gospel in a way that what we say it is will be far less than what the New Testament teaches it is.

Indeed, we must preach the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in order to preach the gospel. This good news is the basis of all else we must preach in preaching the gospel. But, we must also preach the good news of how to get rid of our sins, and the good news of how to act and how to live right as Christians.

Preach the word!

## Accept Mistreatment

**Bobby Key**

Too many in the church demand to have their own way. It is my way or no way -- I will rule or I will ruin -- nobody is going to mistreat me and get away with it -- I am not about to lie down and play dead -- either we will do this the way I say or I will split the church wide open -- unless you meet my demand I will see that you have more trouble than you have ever had before! Yes, I have heard these statements and seen this ugly attitude expressed too many times. It could be that some of us are too stubborn,

rebellious and hard-headed to go to heaven! We would rather fight than switch when our opinion is at stake . . . We would prefer to see the church disgraced and torn asunder than to accept mistreatment; real or imaginary. Paul told the Corinthians, "To have such arguments at all is a real defeat for you as Christians. Why not just accept mistreatment and leave it at that? It would be far more honoring to the Lord to let yourself be cheated" (I Corinthians 6:7). Paul is

Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

Those of you who manage to catch this 60-second spot every day know that I've discussed topics relative to almost every category of people! Well, today, I want to draw a lesson from the proud group of you who drive pick-up trucks.

Did you ever consider that a pick-up truck is only good for one load at a time? Yes sir, you put two loads on that ole truck and she'll have real problems. People are that way sometimes -- they carry not only the problems occurring today, but an additional load of worry about tomorrow's problems! Listen to Jesus: "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matthew 6:34). The Bible deals with how you live today. Are you living the life of a faithful Christian?

# Is The Gift Of Salvation Unconditional?

Continued From Page 2

A ruler of the Jews once approached Jesus at night to question Him and learn about His teaching. Jesus loved his soul to such an extent that he instructed him as to the way of entering God's kingdom. Jesus said, (and it yet applies today) "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Two verses later he went on to explain, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (3:5). Nicodemus, the 3,000 on Pentecost, the eunuch, Saul of Tarsus and many other Biblical characters knew Jesus did not have reference to amniotic fluid. Jesus was not saying a baby must first be born

into the world to enter the kingdom -- how ridiculous! This would have been irrelevant to Nicodemus since he was already a man of some years. But rather he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (emp. TC). They are of equal importance.

One who holds the promise of salvation is one who is "in Christ." Those who reject the demands of the Gospel, those who are ignorant of God's provision of salvation through Jesus, and those who love unrighteousness remain under the power of darkness with no reasonable expectation of receiving God's gift of eternal

life (II Thessalonians 1:6-9).

One must obey the commands of the Gospel to get "into Christ" where spiritual blessings and salvation are found (I Corinthians 12:13). To obey the gospel is to obey the faith (Acts 6:7). To obey the error is the devil's snare. Quoted by John, Jesus declares, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31, 32). We must obey Christ rather than men.

To obey the gospel is to obey the truth (I Peter 1:18-23). To obey the gospel is to obey Christ. Speaking of the Son, the

Hebrew writer says, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. . ." (Hebrews 5:9). In conclusion we note: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that

obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter 4:17, 18). Why not enter the Kingdom of Christ today by hearing his call and obeying his voice? -  
--Greeneville, Kentucky.

## More Sex Education?

Continued From Page 2

teacher) writes, "When teens are taught contraception in the classroom, they are led to believe that this is a legitimate option for them. We don't instruct in Driver's Education on 'how to speed without getting caught,' or 'how to get traffic tickets fixed.' Since sex outside marriage is not healthy for the teens in our classes, why offer them advice on 'how to do it?'"<sup>3</sup>

3. The kind of "sex education" young people need today is that which is taught in the Word of God - that MARRIED LOVE is God's plan for sexual fulfillment. "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Hebrew 13:4).

<sup>1</sup>Dr. James Dobson, "Sex Education," Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions About Raising Children, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Thomas Sowell, "The Big Lie in Sex Education,"

AFA Journal, April 1992, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. James Dobson, "Dr. James Dobson (called a dangerous extremist by the Georgia Department of Education) gives his views on sex education," The Rome Christian News, March 1992, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>David Van Biema, "What's Gone Wrong With Teen Sex," People, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup>Dr. John S. Green, director of Vanderbilt University's division of adolescent medicine and student health, as stated at a recent parenting seminar sponsored by the downtown First Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

<sup>7</sup>Beth Howard, "Class of 2001," Omni, September 1992, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup>As quoted by John Gipson, "Sex Education," Keynote, October 1993, p. 2.

\*Suggested reading.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

went to Edward Everett asking what he should do about it. The reply of Everett was classic! "Do nothing! Half the people who bought the paper never saw the article. Half of those who understood it, did not believe it. Half of those who believed it are of no account anyway!" If some who are so sensitive about "keeping the record straight" and about being misrepresented and misunderstood, could adopt Mr. Everett's philosophy, many of the problems that exist in the church would disappear.

Perhaps the following words from Abraham Lincoln will encourage us in times of adversity: "I do the very best I know how -- the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything -- if the end brings me out wrong, ten thousand angels swearing I was right would make no difference." Remember, "Love suffereth long, and is kind" (I Corinthians 13:4).

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

## Will Christ Be At The Prom This Year?

Continued From Page 1

to do right that you will at least seriously hear me out.

Webster defines "prom" as "a formal dance given by a high school or college class." While I have some personal problems with some other things that go on at the prom (i.e. drinking, sexual aggression, general rebellion), there would be those who would argue that none of those things really happen so I won't belabor the point. I am aware that dancing (by it's very definition) is a part of the prom. Since the purpose of the prom is dancing, if dancing is wrong then the prom is wrong. Here is a list of reasons why dancing is wrong. Please honestly consider them:

1. It is forbidden in the scriptures.
2. It destroys one's influence for good.
3. It depends solely on the mingling of the sexes.
4. It is not to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31).

Very few Christians would deny that dancing is a sin. So the next question is can I go to the prom without sinning? "I won't dance, I just want to dress up and be with my friends" is the argument often waged to

support a Christian attending the prom. Paul said to avoid the very "appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). Could one frequent the bar without leaving the impression that he is guilty of the sin of drinking? He may not drink but everyone who knows he frequents the place believes that is why he is there. If the primary reason to attend the prom is to dance, then when a Christian young person striving to uphold the banner of the cross goes, he or she lets the world believe that he believes dancing is all right.

Back to the original question, "Will Christ be at the prom this year?" I suggest He never has been and this year will be no exception. We should go nowhere that we could not invite Christ along with us. We should do nothing that we would not want to be doing when Christ returns. Say no to the prom because of a Saviour who died to make you different.

Perhaps one more question is in order. If Christ were to return then, will HE HAVE TO GO TO THE PROM TO FIND YOU?

## Accept Mistreatment

Continued From Page 3

talking about going to law with a brother. The principle, however, applies in other areas of Christian behavior. I stand amazed in the presence of the Bible. It surpasses my own imagination how the Lord could reveal so many eternal truths and practical everyday patterns and solve them in one book. When we fail to follow the Lord's way there are anger and ill feelings, if not absolute hatred, between brethren. It is hard for a brother bent on getting his due to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us." The devil laughs, angels weep, and the world turns away in disgust at the way brethren act toward one another. Why can't we learn to turn the other cheek? Follow the Master "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:23). The Christian should be willing to take less than he thinks he has coming to him, in order to avoid disgracing the church. It is better to suffer wrongfully -- Christ did -- than to destroy the church for which Christ died.

Once a man who had been slandered by a newspaper

April 22, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Three Ingredients To Controlling Stress (Part 3)
- The Religion He Banked On Crashed
- What Is The Real Problem In Our Society?
- The Effect Of Preaching
  - "Most Of A Minute"
- "Not Given To Much Wine"
  - Beatitudes

Volume 30 Number 17  
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# The Words of Truth

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

## Finding The Real McCoy

Allen Webster

Kid McCoy, now largely forgotten, was among the most colorful boxers of the 1890s. Outside the ring, he did not look at all formidable. Those who saw him for the first time often insisted that he could not possibly be the noted mauler.

Tradition says that mild-looking McCoy fired up when challenged to prove his identity. Barflies who refused to believe him were likely to wind up flat on their faces in the sawdust.

Kid McCoy's memorable demonstrations that he was the real fighter and not a look-alike became legendary. As a result, someone or something indisputably the authentic article is likely to be lauded as the real McCoy (Why You Say It, The Fascinating Stories Behind Everyday Words and Phrases, Webb Garrison, 1992, p. 89).

QUESTION: If there is only one church mentioned in the Bible, how can a person tell it from all other churches?

This is a good question. How can we find the "real McCoy" church? The Bible does only authorize one church. Jesus promised to build only one church (Matthew 16:18). Only one church was established on Pentecost Day (Acts 2). We read of only one kind of church in the rest of the New Testament (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22, 23).

Now, obviously, there are

many different kinds of churches in the world today (more than 300 major organizations). Most people believe that it does not matter which church one is part of, just so he is religious. Others think that he does not have to be a part of any church. Those who are really careful to follow the Scriptures, though, want to be a part of the church one can read of in the Bible.

So how can you tell?

ANSWER: This is much like a person trying to determine whether a painting is the genuine article or an imitation.

Suppose, for instance, that there was a valuable Leonardo de Vinci original painting that had been lost for some time. You became privy to the information that it was rumored to be in a collection of paintings in a museum in France. So you board a plane, locate the museum, and find that there are hundreds of paintings on display and in storage. How will you be able to find the one real de Vinci original?

You would begin to narrow your choices by eliminating those which could not possibly be a de Vinci. You would ask at least three questions.

What Signature Does It Have?

The most obvious thing would be to look for a signature? Do any of the paintings have de Vinci's name attached? If so, then these might be worth

examining first.

Similarly, what name does a church wear today? If it is not a Scriptural designation, then it is a counterfeit church. Peter commanded, "If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (I Peter 4:11). This means call Bible things by Bible names.

As relates to the church, one can read of the "church of God," the "church of Christ," the "church of the firstborn," and just simply "the church" in the New Testament. If I could not find the name of my church in the Bible, then I would want to find one which goes by a Scriptural designation.

What Date Does It Have?

You would normally think to look to see if there were a date on the picture. If some were dated before de Vinci lived, and others were after his death, then these could be eliminated for investigation. Or, if by some test, the date could be determined, then you would use that test. If it was supposed to have come from the Renaissance period, but tests to have been painted ten years ago, then one would know that could not be the original.

Just so, when looking for the true church, we need to ask, "When did this church begin?" Most churches are of recent origin. Many of the doctrines they teach originated with Calvin, Luther, the Pope or some council, instead of

with Jesus and His apostles.

This will not do (read Galatians 1:10 and Revelation 22:18, 19). We must find a church that traces its roots to New Testament times -- a church that is the same as the primitive New Testament church.

What "Brush Strokes" Does It Have?

A careful investigator, if unable to determine for sure the real painting by the first two tests, would begin to look a little closer. He would look carefully at the picture to determine if it bore the marks of the painter.

Does it represent the kind of brush strokes and color schemes that he would use? You might have to do some research to learn as much about his style and personality as possible. It might take a good deal of work. But the thought of being able to purchase a real masterpiece would spur you on.

Just so, when looking for the one true church, we should carefully compare "brush strokes." By this we mean, does the church under investigation teach New Testament doctrine without addition, subtraction, or modification?

Does it teach a person to be saved like Jesus did (cf. Mark 16:16)? Does it teach people to worship like the Apostles did (John 4:24; I Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 5:19)? Does it stress Christian living and

stand with Jesus on moral issues (cf. Matthew 19:4-9; Titus 2:11, 12). If not, then it cannot be the one church mentioned in the New Testament.

This is going to take some research. You will have to get out the Bible and read. It may take considerable thought, comparison, and soul-searching. But the thought of going to heaven will spur you on.

We believe the New Testament church is in existence in the world today (and probably in your community) and that we are a part of it. But we do not ask you to accept our word for it. Test for yourself. Examine every church in your community. See which one teaches and practices most nearly what is found in the New Testament.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth it" (Matthew 13:44).

Don't settle for anything short of the real McCoy!

--Tiplersville, MS.

**Be A  
Words Of  
Truth  
Subscriber**

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Three Ingredients To Controlling Stress (Part 3)

Glenn Colley

In **Philippians 4:6-7** the apostles writes, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

"Be careful for nothing" literally means, Have no anxiety about anything. In our time we might employ slang and say, "Be stressed-out about nothing."

Perhaps it would be good to first examine what this does not teach. This doesn't teach that we are not to have any concern at all about temporal, material matters, like preserving property or providing for our families. **I Timothy 5:8** in fact demands that Christian husbands pay serious attention to keeping good employment: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." *Worse than an infidel!* The Bible offers no comfort to the lazy man who isn't sufficiently

concerned about providing for the material needs of his family. God provides food for the birds but He doesn't put it in the nests!

What **Philippians 4:6-7** does teach is that we are to have such confidence in God as to free our minds from serious stress and anxiety. Great faith is demanded, **Romans 10:17**. Jesus said, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

"But," one might object, "How can I possibly control my anxiety as this teaches?" The inspired writer gives us the tools:

1. Rejoice in the Lord (**Philippians 4:4**).

2. Be thankful for what you have (**Philippians 4:6**).

3. Pray for what you want (**Philippians 4:6**).

People who are always thankful rarely worry about what they may never get. As one man said, "Chronic worry and gratitude seldom, if ever, keep company." "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (**I Timothy 6:6**).

The promise is more to be desired than silver and gold:

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 4:7**). This is peace from the storms and stresses of this life.

**Isaiah 26:3** says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Note finally, that the passages promise that this peace of God "shall keep your hearts and minds . . ." "Shall keep" is a military term meaning that the mind would be guarded as a camp or a castle is guarded. It would be preserved from the intrusion of anxious fears and alarms.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

May all Christians take full advantage of the peace which passes all understanding through Christ Jesus.

## What Is The Real Problem In Our Society?

Tim Rice

We read in **Proverbs 14:34**: "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*" Today we see in our country random acts of violence which are truly appalling. How could people fire a gun into a crowd of human beings that they don't even know? Who thirty years ago would have believed this would happen in America in the 1990s. Yet it does happen almost every day. This shows a total lack of a consciousness of sin. People seem puzzled as to why this is occurring. Christians know. Young people have been desensitized to acts of violence. Adults who first introduced all sorts of perversion to the media speculated it would not damage young people. Having been reared in a "better America," they knew they would not participate in some of these acts. However, they taught them to a nation of young people who adopted them as their code of conduct. What Christians said years ago about television and movies came from the perspective of the Bible and the warnings proved accurate. A disregard for authority and the Bible standard has been passed from parent to child, and it has resulted in people's going wild.

Just after the surgeon general was appointed by president Clinton, she was asked this question: "What can we do about the continuing rise of

illegitimate births?" She replied, "We need to educate young people about their bodies." A member of the church observed in an editorial in the *Birmingham News*: "Did children know more about their bodies in the 1950s than they know now?" He went on to point out that there are few illegitimate births in the 1950s but there is an epidemic of such today. He noted the problem is a moving away from the Biblical standard for the lives of adults and young people.

In **Proverbs 28:10**, we read: "*Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.*" If a person pollutes the society in which he lives, he must live in pollution. Would Phil Donahue like his children to do the gross, perverted acts he parades on the television screen? If not, then why be party to giving such filth wide publication?

**Romans** chapter one lists a number of disgusting sins practiced by the Gentile world. One should read this often for a perfect description of our society. In the course of this discussion, Paul reveals the root of the problem in **Romans 1:25**: "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.*" Again, he shows the

Continued On Page 4

## The Religion He Banked On Crashed

Neal Pollard

Brother Luke Warm was a good person. He was a devoted family man and likable character. He was a sharp businessman, too. People say he just had a nose for sound investments. However, as well-rounded as he was in his worldly and family affairs, brother Warm forgot God.

At the worship assembly, his

mind regularly made **WITHDRAWALS** from the singing, praying, and preaching. Come Sunday and Wednesday nights, he seemed to have a **LOW-INTEREST RATE** as he rarely returned for those worship services. Of course, this lackluster allegiance to the Lord's church really made a **STATEMENT** to his neighbors and co-workers.

They thought it odd that he could **DEPOSIT** himself at the fishing hole and ball game for three hours at a time, but complained to them about the preacher's twenty-five minute sermon.

Brother Warm could not have had much **INTEREST** in **SAVING** the lost, for he never approached one person with the gospel. It did not

Continued On Page 4



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# The Effect Of Preaching

**Winfred Clark**

All of us who preach want our preaching to be effective. That means it will accomplish something that is good. We want it to please God first and foremost. We also want it to bring about the desired spiritual results in the lives of those who listen.

We know that often our preaching does not have the effect that we would want, but it does have an effect. There are times when people do not respond in a positive fashion, though they do respond. This should come as no surprise. Our Lord forewarned us of this in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:4-15). Out of the 4 kinds of soil described, only one kind would respond in the right way. That means that 3 out of 4 would not.

Take the time to read another section of the New Testament and you will find a case where there was an effect but it was less than a desired effect (Acts 24:22-27). Here Luke describes the case of Felix. He was a Roman governor in the time of Paul. It was to him that Paul was given the opportunity to preach. This seems to be the second time Paul had been before Felix, and this time he had with him his third wife, Drusilla. What would this great apostle have to say to such people? Remember that what he said was directed by the Holy Spirit. What was his subject? What did he discuss?

Note it is said, "And he reasoned" (Acts 24:25). This is used in other places in the book of Acts such as, 17:2. Here is said, "he reasoned out of the scriptures." He showed how Jesus was the fulfillment of what the Old Testament had said concerning the Christ. So the preaching that Felix would hear was that which could be supported by the scriptures. But what was the effect? How did he react to what he heard? It is said, "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). What caused him to react in this

way? What was it that Paul said on this occasion? What did he talk about?

## I. RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT HE DID NOT RESPECT

"And as he reasoned of righteousness" (Acts 24:25). Various translators say "he reasoned of justice, morality, uprightness, purity, goodness or morals." They are surely on track as Thayer says righteousness means: "the state of him who is such as he ought to be, the condition acceptable to God, integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling and acting." This is the sort of thing that protects one from a life of sin. Take note of what Paul had to say to those at Corinth, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not" (I Corinthians 15:34). It is that which the child of God is to "follow after" (I Timothy 6:11). It is that which is set in contrast with iniquity (Hebrews 1:9).

This is something that is abundantly supported by the scriptures. Again and again will you find the Lord and the apostles urging men to practice a life of righteousness (I John 2:29, 3:7, 3:10). It is also something that sets the standard by which man is to live. In fact, we are told that we shall be judged by this very standard. "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;" (Acts 17:31). We are not left to wonder about the standard, for it will be that standard that is righteous, the standard for right living and acting. It will mean measuring up to the standard that God has set for us. But this is the thing that Felix did not respect. He walked to the beat of a different drummer.

## II. SELF CONTROL THAT HE DID NOT PRACTICE

Notice that he not only reasoned of righteousness but he also reasoned of "temperance." This is "self control, continence, mastery of passions, self mastery." It is said of Felix that Drusilla was his third wife. He would have been right at home in our modern society and in some

cases even with those who are in the church. He would live by the code "if it feels good, do it."

Paul surely describes such a life style in his enumeration of the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Here he says "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings and the such like." Surely one can see in that catalogue of sin a lack of self control.

Move to that section of Romans where Paul deals with much the same thing. He speaks of the "wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," (Romans 1:18). He goes on to show how man becomes foolish in his thinking, really thinking that he is wise. These are the men of which it is said, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: . . . And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another" (Romans 1:24, 27). Here is a picture of man who is lacking in self control, in fact he is living a life that is out of control. He does not respect God nor himself. Here is surely a picture of people who lack self control and they would be the same kind of people Paul found in Felix.

## III. JUDGEMENT FOR WHICH HE IS NOT READY

Paul not only reasoned of righteousness and temperance, he also reasoned of "judgment to come." Paul knew there was a coming judgment. He also knew that this was certain and such needed to be discussed.

If there was no judgment to come then Felix would not have to be concerned and neither would we. But that judgment is certain and Paul knew it. He was not about to try to ignore it nor would he allow Felix to do so.

He could surely speak of the fact of the judgment. This can be done because the Lord sets forth the fact that it is a fact.

Listen to some statements the Lord made: "Shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21, 22), "For Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment" (Matthew 10:15), "the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). All of these passages and more speak of the fact that there is a judgment to come. So, Paul's preaching was supported by the Lord himself.

He could speak of the judgment being universal. Paul knew this would be the case for all men for we are told "it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). The judgment will be just as universal as death, and that is as universal as you can become. Paul knew that Felix would be there. He would not escape anymore than any of us will be able to by-pass or escape it.

He could also speak of it being something that was final. There will be no appeal beyond the judgment. One has but to read some relevant passages to know that this is the case (Matthew 25:31-46).

Yes, the judgment was made known to Felix from one who

was inspired. There could be no doubt about it, and it does not seem that Felix doubted what was being said.

What was the effect on Felix? How did he react to what Paul had to say? Did he deny what he said? Did he try to dispute what was said? Absolutely not. It is said, "Felix trembled" (Acts 24:25). So we know he heard what was said, we also know he understood what was said, and we know that he also knew that what was said applied to him. He did not try to ignore it as being applicable to someone else other than himself. There was a reaction of concern. He saw himself as God saw him and knew that there was more that he needed to do. He even left the impression that at a later date he would do what he was supposed to do. Did he ever do so? We have no account of this being the case but we know what he should have done. Paul's preaching had reached the heart but it was now up to the man that heard. He must obey.

--Athens, AL.

**Upcoming  
Words Of Truth  
Lectureship  
September 30 - October 3, 1994  
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## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**Religious ideas based, not on the Bible but on superstition, have no boundaries. For example, consider the idea of "reincarnation." This idea, which many folks have adopted, suggests that people can die and then later return as some other person or thing. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The word of God never offers us a second chance at an earthly life after we're dead. What it does say is that we will be judged according to how we have lived in this life.**

**Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto man once to die and after that, the judgment." Let's not spend time fretting over what we used to be, or who we will be. Let's rather spend our time productively examining how we're living today.**

# "Not Given To Much Wine"

**Holger Neubauer**

One of the qualifications of a deacon, given in I Timothy 3:7 is that he must not be, "given to much wine." Earlier, the apostle Paul expresses pointedly, that an elder is not to be "given to wine." Incredibly some have surmised from these verses, that a deacon is allowed to imbibe in alcoholic drink while the elder is to be a teetotaler. If that be the case, then the deacon could not qualify himself to be an elder while living up to the qualifications of a deacon. This understanding of Paul's statement about wine is not tenable.

Neither does the phrase "not given to much wine," imply that both deacons and elders may imbibe in a little bit of wine. In Ecclesiastes 7:17 we find the admonition "be not over much wickedness." Would one say for this reason it is all right to be over a little bit of wickedness? Would the fact that Peter mentions "excess of riot" imply that a little bit of riot is justified? (I Peter 4:4). Absolutely not. The admonition in I Timothy 3:8 is hyperbolic. An hyperbole is a tool of speech that emphasizes for accent. One might say, "don't be a big sinner," yet no one would suggest by this that it is all right to be a "little sinner."

Drunkenness is condemned in the Bible. In Ephesians 5:18, the scripture says, "Be not drunk with wine." The word drunk, from the greek word *methusko* means to "grow softened." The process of growing softened begins

with the first drink and it is the very process of growing drunk which is condemned in the Bible. The Bible does not authorize a little alcohol any more than it authorizes a little cocaine use or a little bit of fornication.

Some conclude that drinking in moderation is authorized in the Bible, because Jesus made wine, in John 2. The word wine is translated from the greek word *oinos*. The term simply refers to fruit of the vine. *Oinos* may be either an alcoholic or a non-alcoholic beverage, the context of the passage in which the word is used is the deciding factor. In Isaiah 65:8, the Bible refers to "wine found in the cluster." Here, as the grapes hung in cluster on the vine, the juice is called wine. In Judges 9:13, the parable against Abimelech speaks of the vine attached to the grape as wine. In neither of these instances is there any doubt of the fact that wine is spoken of as the non-fermented juice in the grape while attached to the vine. The wine that was alcoholic was not to be looked at, much less imbibed in. Proverbs 23:31, says, "look not thou upon the wine when it is red." God forbade even the looking upon intoxicants in the Old Testament and His attitude has not changed toward this dangerous drug. Jesus could not have possibly made an alcoholic drink, for he made 120-180 gallons of the drink. John 2:6 tells us that there were six waterpots of stone containing two or three firkins a piece. Since a firkin is about ten gallons, and each

container held 20-30 gallons, at least 120 gallons were made. Since those at the feast were already drinking, if Jesus made an alcoholic beverage, he tempted them to drunkenness! Yet in Habakkuk 2:15, the law under which Jesus lived said, "Woe unto him, that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him." Under the law, it was not only wrong to drink but it was also wrong to give it to others! Jesus would

have violated this passage if he made an alcoholic drink. But Jesus did not violate any law of God.

Timothy, a teetotaler, was urged to take a "little wine" for his stomach's sake (I Timothy 5:23). Alcohol is a powerful drug that God purposed for medicinal use. Drugs are not to be taken for social purposes but for medicinal purposes. Who would hand out a little bit of Tylenol to help his guests to

relax? So too, alcohol is a drug that need never be used in a social setting.

There is no Bible authority to imbibe in alcoholic drink. Those that do violate the scripture and sin in doing so. Let every Christian put away alcoholic drink and follow Christ and His will.

--P.O. Box 1405, Forest Park, GA 30051-1405.

## What Is The Real Problem In Our Society?

Continued From Page 2

source of the sins in verse 28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." These are exactly the origins of the problems in our society today.

One of my favorite poems is *The Inchape Rock*, by Robert Southey. In it we read about an old abbot who lovingly placed a buoy with a bell in it above a dangerous rock in the ocean. This was so that sailors could avoid the rock in the blackness of night in terrible storms. On a still day, as a ship stood motionless on the ocean, Sir Ralph the Rover, its pilot, was bored. He sent his men to cut loose the bell to torment the abbot. He laughed as it bubbled to the bottom. Later, on a stormy black night he longed to hear the Inchape bell. As he thought about it, the ship shuttered. It had

struck the Inchape Rock! As it began to sink, and just before he died, he thought he heard the bell. What he heard was his death knell.

People today, in their mad pursuit of pleasure, are ignoring the Bible, and oblivious to what pain their actions may cause others. They are sounding their own death knells.

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## Beatitudes

For Friends Of The Aged:

Blessed are they who understand  
My faltering step and palsied hand.  
Blessed are they who know that my ears today  
Must strain to catch the things they say.  
Blessed are they who seem to know  
That my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.  
Blessed are they who looked away  
When coffee was spilled at table today.  
Blessed are they with a cheery smile  
Who stop to chat for a little while.  
Blessed are they who never say  
"You've told that story twice today."  
Blessed are they who know the ways  
To bring back memories of yesterdays.  
Blessed are they who make it known  
That I'm loved, respected and not alone.  
Blessed are they who know I'm at a loss  
To find the strength to carry the Cross.  
Blessed are they who ease the days  
On my journey Home in loving ways.

Dedicated to all our elderly friends and neighbors.

## The Religion He Banked On Crashed

Continued From Page 2

REGISTER with him that his influence contributed to his children's leaving the church when they left home. He had not INSURED their faithfulness by leading family devotion and being involved in the work of the church, nor did he INVEST much time in teaching them God's Word. Neither did he realize that he was living his life on the

wrong side of the LEDGER. He did not CHECK out what pitiful RETURN the Bible shows such a life to produce.

One day, as brother Warm went about his affairs, Christ returned. Brother Warm was surprised to find himself on the Lord's left hand. By and by, brother Warm was called before the Judge to give

ACCOUNT of his life. Though he was basically moral and honest, he could not be given CREDIT for being evangelistic or faithful. As he heard the words "Depart From Me," brother Warm wrung his hands at the eternal EXPENSE of ROBBING God through neglect and uninvolvedness.

April 29, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- The Elders And Ladies Day
- The Lord Invites
- Jesus Had Something To Say
- Christians Are Succours!
- God's Seed
- How Can We Be Sure Our Sunday Is The First Day Of The Week?
- A Proverb To Ponder

Volume 30 Number 18  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Psalm

### "Pour Out Your Heart"

**Johnny Ramsey**

One of the fullest verses in the Old Testament is found in Psalms 62:8. Notice the wonderful three point lesson therein: "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us."

We need to learn these principles anew in our modern society. In fact, members of the Lord's family often act as though we had forgotten that Jehovah is our refuge. Our trust in the Creator will cause us to pour out our hearts unto Him. Emerson once said: "All that I have seen causes me to trust in God for all that I have not seen." This is virtually the thesis of Hebrews, chapter 11. The word trust means "to have confidence in." Notice carefully these random thoughts from Scripture. "Our help is in the name of the Lord . . . casting all your care upon Him. . . God is our refuge and strength . . . so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me . . . Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men . . . I will fear no evil for Thou art with me . . . If God be for us, who can be against us . . . For His merciful kindness is great toward us and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord." The best

summary of this theme concerning which God begat trust in our hearts is found in II Corinthians, chapter one: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation . . ."

Yes, trust in Him at all times. The saddest scene on earth to me is to see a wife and children bereft of their beloved husband and father. Or, for a virtuous woman to be taken suddenly from the midst of the home by means of death. Or, for a small, precious child to pass from this life thus removing the sunshine from many hearts. I have stood by the casket as loved ones passed by for the final earthly view of their departed ones. I have heard the deepest expressions of trust in the Lord on these occasions. I have been greatly stirred to see the spiritual stability of mature Christians during such moments of sorrow. The reality of Christianity is never more beautiful than when in the hour of tribulation we exclaim: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" God is a refuge for us! One real tragedy is the strange situation of those who mightily depend on God in the hour of trial and then forsake Him in the day of success,

health and strength. Is our Father incapable of receiving our confidence when we have ascended from the valley of tears unto the mountain-peak of happiness? Or is this human deflection of forgetting the source of our blessings just another tool of the Devil? Success is the one thing that some people cannot endure. The Deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9) knows it. Let us trust in God at all times.

Closely aligned with these thoughts are the words: Pour Out Your Heart Before Him. The emphasis of the Hebrew language in Psalms 62:8 simply means to commit yourself wholly unto God! The phrase now under discussion includes prayer and spontaneous praise flowing from the created unto the Creator. In James, chapter 5, we read of the natural response of the spiritual life whether in sadness or in joy -- let the Heavenly Father know! He knows, He cares, He blesses. Isn't it thrilling to hear someone just talk with God when his hearts is on fire with love for eternal verities? Too much of the time our prayers are simply stilted, formalistic preachments. We desperately need more fervent communion with our Maker in prayer. Yes, in sorrow and sickness, in pain and bereavement, in success, happiness and victory

-- Pour out your heart unto God. He is our refuge, our solace, our balm, our strength! "Then trust in God through all thy days; Fear not, for He doth hold

thy hand; Though dark thy way, still sing and praise; Sometime, Sometime, we will understand."

## Did Apostles Gamble?

**Mike Benson**

Dear Mike,

"Is casting lots a form of gambling? Did the apostles engage in gambling when they sought a replacement for Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:26)? If so, wouldn't this mean that a Christian could gamble today?"

1. **The passage to which you have reference states,** "And they prayed and said, 'You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:24-26).

2. **The Bible and casting lots.**

"Casting lots was common among the Jews on important and difficult occasions, and it

was natural that the apostles should resort to it in this . . . David divided the priests by lot (I Chronicles 24:5). The land of Canaan was divided by lot (Numbers 26:55; Joshua 15-17, etc.). Jonathan, son of Saul, was detected as having violated his father's command and as bringing calamity on the Israelites by lot (I Samuel 14:41-42). Achan was detected by lot (Joshua 7:16-18). In these instances the use of the lot was regarded as a solemn appeal to God for his direct interference in cases which they could not themselves decide. The choice of an apostle was an event of the same kind, and was regarded as a solemn appeal to God for his direction and guidance in a case which the apostles could not determine."

"A specially marked stone was placed among other stones in a cloth (like we

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## The Elders And Ladies Day

Glenn Colley

To what degree should the elders be involved in "Ladies Days?" The idea of having such special times for women is very common today, and is enjoying great popularity. This editor is not opposed to having ladies days. In fact, my wife will speak in nine or more this year alone. Titus 2:3, 4 not only permits older women to teach younger women, but includes the idea in the teachings called "sound doctrine." Thus, having a ladies study weekend, or similar event, seems to me to be well within the realm of God's approval.

I am concerned however, about some potential problems which need to be addressed by the elders of the various congregations before they occur. Because women are forbidden to preach in our assemblies where men are present, I Timothy 2:11-14, the fact that this is a "ladies day" would prevent the elders of the church from attending. They are nevertheless, responsible for the appropriateness of the activities. What can they do to shepherd the sheep in this situation?

First, they should involve themselves in enough of the planning that it can be truthfully said that they "oversee" this activity (Acts 20:28). This would not require that they actually planned the event, but that they did approve the plans.

Second, and extremely important, they should reserve the right to approve or reject the proposed speakers. The elders must not passively approve the speakers for their ladies days without the same investigation used for other

teachers and preachers. Does this lady teach the truth? Does she come from a known liberal church? Would we be implying support for the liberal movement in the church by inviting this speaker? What does she believe and what will she teach when asked about feminism, women's role in the church, marriage and divorce, the essential nature of scriptural baptism, denominationalism, etc., etc.? She shouldn't receive more considerate, careful scrutiny than a man who is invited to come for a Gospel Meeting, but she should receive an equal amount.

Second, an eldership would be well advised to design a questionnaire including these and other important matters for ANYONE with whom they are not well familiar, who will be asked to teach the flock they are overseeing. This should include the speakers for ladies day. It may be often the case that the ladies suggested for possible speakers are ones with whom the elders are not familiar at all. Would they ask a man to hold a meeting even though they hadn't heard him preach, hadn't read his writing, and hadn't made his acquaintance? Certainly not. Neither should they permit this occurrence with regard to the ladies day.

While it might be argued that such a questionnaire would not be a perfect guarantee, it would certainly give the shepherds a good idea of the proposed speaker's soundness. A teacher or preacher who objected to being asked questions regarding his/her beliefs and teachings should

not be considered. A person who truly loves the Word of God is never uncomfortable expressing that love and belief in that Word. In fact, he or she would appreciate a concerned and involved group of elders.

This is not to suggest at all that the ladies in the church would necessarily be unwise judges regarding the faithfulness of teachers. I personally know many Christian women who are well qualified to discern between a teacher who is sound in the faith, and one who is not. It is simply to acknowledge that we are in a time in which many false teachings are being widely circulated, and shepherds desperately need to keep the flock furnished with good spiritual food instead of spiritual poison (I Peter 4:1, 2).

Third, elders would do well to communicate with the leaders of the ladies day after the day(s) has past. Did all go smoothly? Were there any problems? How can we be of service to you in this good work? Christian women, who understand the elders responsibilities as shepherds, will appreciate the input and oversight.

The distinctiveness of the church is being lost in some places. Liberal teachings are convincing some Christians that the church of our Lord is nothing but another denomination. They are wrong. May God give us strong elders with deep wisdom and understanding of His word. May they be courageous and firm and kind and gentle. May they help us as we continue our walk toward heaven.

## The Lord Invites

Bobby Key

Facing the channel of New York harbor stands a statue familiar to millions. Multitudes of earth's down-trodden look upon this Statue of Liberty as a symbol of American liberty and a beacon of refuge for immigrants. Engraved on the pedestal on which it stands is the invitation: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of our teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Sin has separated us from God. Every non-Christian is "Without Christ. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). God was not willing that man should pass through this vale of tears and finally die without hope; therefore, He gave His only begotten Son as a ransom for the race. Jesus came to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The Saviour has extended a wonderful invitation to those who are weary and heavy laden, those who are burdened with sin, those who are exposed to eternal death, those who are living without God and in danger of dying without a promise. With outstretched arms, He is

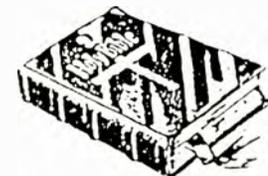
pleading, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28, 30).

You must decide whether you will accept or reject this invitation. If you reject Christ, you will continue to be burdened with sin and exposed to eternal death. To come to the Saviour, in His own appointed way, means pardon, peace and rest. But remember, we have no assurance of pardon, peace and rest unless we take the yoke. We ought to appreciate this invitation because it comes from the loving Lord who died to redeem us.

To accept His invitation and enjoy His promises we must believe in Him with all of our hearts, repent of every sin, and be buried with Him in baptism. After obeying these simple commands, we gladly live for Him, who died for us, until the last fleeting breath leaves our body and we are at peace with Him at home. May God bless each of you in seeing the beauty of this invitation and fleeing to Him for shelter and refuge, so that the peace that passeth all understanding may be yours.

--324 17th SW, Miami, OK.

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# Jesus Had Something To Say

## Winfred Clark

There are times when we find ourselves at a loss for words. These occasions may be when we cannot justify our position. There was once a man that was speechless because he came without proper attire to a wedding feast (Matthew 22:12). There was nothing he could say. He had nothing to say.

There were times when Jesus had nothing to say. When he stood before Pilate, with all of his questions and charges, "he answered him never a word" (Matthew 27:12). He had nothing to say in a situation where men would not respect what they already knew.

There was a time however, when Jesus did have something to say. It was when he was in one of the last meetings with His apostles prior to his death. A record of this meeting will be found in the book of John 13-16. Our attention will be given to what he had to say in the first six verses of chapter fourteen.

These verses are surely not unfamiliar to many people in our land; that is, not to those who have read and revered the Bible. You have heard these verses at one funeral after another. If you attend others you will hear them again. They are most comforting and consoling. But why would this be the case? Why would they mean so much to the apostles and to us?

### I. HE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE ROOT OF THEIR PROBLEM.

Jesus dealt with the root of their problem. He said, "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1). He did not treat this as if it was not a problem. He knew they were worried, really worried. These men had heard him speak of leaving and they did not understand what he was talking about. They were troubled when they had no real reason to be troubled. If they fully understand the reason for his leaving, their hearts would not be troubled. They would be able to look back and see why he said, "let not your heart be

troubled." The true facts understood would remove the problem.

So many times we find ourselves troubled because we may not have the facts, or we may have ignored the facts, or we may have misunderstood the facts. Take all those anxious moments we spend worrying about food, clothing and shelter. Didn't Jesus give us teaching about such a matter? If you will look at what he had to say, much of the worry will subside. For example, "Therefore I say unto you. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?" (Matthew 6:25). Jesus then proceeds to show how God takes care of the fowls and the flowers (Matthew 6:26-30). He then argued that if God takes care of them, would he not also take care of us? Now those are the facts. But if one were to ignore these facts, then he might have a troubled heart.

### II. HE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT WHAT OUGHT TO BE BELIEVED.

He pointed out that there are some things they already believed, but there were other things yet to be believed. He said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:10). He knew that what they were to believe would have something to do with their state of heart.

None of us should have any doubts about whether Jesus has a right to tell us what to believe. He is the "Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)." He had a perfect right to say they ought to believe in him as well as in the Father. But this was not new. He had been telling people they were to believe in him before he ever said this to the apostles. He made this statement to some unbelievers: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"

(John 8:24). They were to believe that He was the Christ, the Son of God. He had something to say about what they were to believe about Him.

### III. HE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT HIS FATHER

Jesus had just spoken of their belief in God. He now identified himself with God, his Father. He also spoke of the Father's house. But there was to be a place in the Father's house for His disciples. It was this to which Peter would refer later when he said, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4). We know that heaven is indeed the dwelling place of the Father. Remember the words of the Lord, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

We know where our Father resides and we know that this is the place where Jesus is making preparation for His own.

### IV. HE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT HIS RETURN.

Jesus announced to His disciples that He would go away. But there is with that announcement another statement, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again" (John 14:3). You will see that He has something to say about the fact that He would come again. He will not be gone forever. He will return and that promise is much more reliable than the one made by MacArthur during the last world war. He could not be sure, but our Lord could.

You will note that this announcement was not made to scare people but rather to assure them. He wanted them to look forward to His return. He did not want them to dread it. He wanted them to long for His return. If they could look forward to His return, so can others who live as these men lived.

### V. HE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT ACCESS TO THE FATHER.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus was not hesitant to speak in an exclusive fashion. He knew that His sacrifice alone would open the way to the Father (Hebrews 10:19-21). That is the reason you find men like Peter and others saying, "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). One would be foolish indeed to ignore this essential fact. To try to reach God in some way other than through Christ would be to no avail.

Yes, Jesus had some things to say. He did not say more than needed to be said, nor did He say less than needed to be said. When you have His word on anything you have the final Word.

--1602 W. Hobbs St., Athens, Al 35611.

## Christians Are Succours!

### Allen Webster

All of us have probably come out on the wrong end of a hasty business decision. We felt terrible that someone was able to so soon separate "the fool from his money." Some think that Christianity is for succours -- they see no reason to give their time, money and energy to something that provides no visible payoff.

You know what? *They are right, Christianity is for succours!* The Bible uses the word *succour* (boetheo), though, in a little different way. It literally means "to run at a cry for help" (from *boe*, "a cry," and *theo*, "run"), that is, "to hurry to help someone who is in need" (*Word Meanings in the NT*, Earle).

The Holy Spirit used it eight times in the New Testament (sometimes translated "help") (Matthew 15:25; Mark 9:22, 24; Acts 16:9; 21:28; II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 2:18; Revelation 12:16). The noun form means "to run; a succorer; helper" (cf. James 5:4) (Strong, 19, 998).

In what ways are Christians succours?

### CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN SUCCURED BY GOD.

"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). "God is our refuge and strength, a very

Continued On Page 4

## Most Of A Minute

### Glenn Colley

Let's take an important lesson today from some of the most valuable real estate: our gardens.

There are some pretty basic laws of planting and reaping. One is that you reap just what you sow (Galatians 6:7).

I Peter 1:23 speaks of becoming a Christian, or being "born again." It says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

We are born again, not by some mystical experience, not by our own warm feelings, but by God's word. When God's word is planted in the heart of a good and honest man, he will become a Christian, and only a Christian. He won't be sectarian, or denominational, because that's not in the seed, God's word. He will just be a Christian, and a member of the church belonging to Christ.

# Christians Are Succours!

Continued From Page 3

present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Is not this the picture of God in the parable of the "Loving Father/Prodigal Son?" "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). Christians serve the God who runs -- to "succour" them.

## CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN SUCCOURED BY CHRIST.

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). He

knows what it is like to be tempted, because the devil used the same avenues to tempt Him that we face today (Hebrews 4:15; I John 2:17). He has promised to provide a way of escape so that we need never be overrun by sin (I Corinthians 10:13). But, if through weakness, we are overcome, He still gently receives us back as we repent (Acts 8:22), even till the "four-hundred and ninetieth time" (Matthew 18:22).

Jesus helped (boetheo) those suffering physically (Matthew 15:25) and emotionally (Mark

9:24). He lives to be our Helper. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

## CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN SUCCOURED BY EACH OTHER.

"That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Romans 16:2). A different word is used here

(*prostatis*) but the meaning is basically the same ("assistant, patroness," Strong; "person of some wealth and position who was thus able to act as patroness of a small and struggling community," Earle). Evidently, Phoebe was financially well-off and had assisted Christians who were facing hard times.

Where would the church today be if there were not Phoebes who "succoured" others who were in need (cf. Luke 10:25-33; 14:12-14; James 1:27)? The story is told of a preacher's wife who met a boy on the cold streets selling newspapers in his barefeet. "Where are your shoes?" "Lady, I ain't got no shoes."

She felt sorry for him and took him into a department store to purchase some socks and shoes. When he had been fitted, he quickly ran back outside without even a word of thanks. As she disappointedly looked in the direction he had gone, she saw him running back. He breathlessly exclaimed, "Lady, I forgot to thank you for these nice, warm shoes!" Then he continued, "Lady, I wanna ask you a question, Are you God's wife?" She was taken aback, stumbled for a reply and stuttered. "Ah, why, no. I'm just one of his children." "Well," the boy said, "I

knowed you must be some kin to Him." We show our kinship with God as we succour the helpless (John 13:33, 34; Proverbs 14:21, 31; 17:5; 19:17; 21:13; 28:8, 27; 29:7, 14; 30:14; 31:9, 20).

Another way Christians have succoured others is by providing for their spiritual needs. Paul received a vision of one saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help (boetheo) us" (Acts 16:9). Philip ran to join himself to the treasurer's chariot, that he might teach him of God's Lamb (Acts 8:30-40).

Someone loved us enough to "succour" us with the Gospel, which led to our salvation (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 15:1-4). Therefore, we should share with others what we enjoy. A doctor successfully performed surgery on the eyes of a blind Chinese man. A few days later, while looking out the window, the doctor saw the man whose sight had been restored leading twelve or fifteen blind men by a rope, bringing them to the doctor so that he might, through the operation, restore their sight. Those of us who have been saved from our spiritual blindness (cf. Revelation 3:17), need to "succour" others into taking the same medicine.

Tricked? No. Succours? Yes. Don't you want to be?

## How Can We Be Sure Our Sunday Is The First Day Of The Week?

Johnny Ramsey

This question, as stated, is really in the field of secular history. However, the implications of the questions have a real bearing on several important Bible themes.

Actually, the answer is simple. We can be sure that "our Sunday" is the first day of the week because the calendar says so! The accepted standard of authority in this realm is the calendar.

On Page 912 in the **Lincoln Library of Essential Information** we read that "in 45 B.C. Julius Caesar decided that there should be three years of 365 days each and then one year of 366 days in perpetual cycle. In 1582, Gregory XIII omitted eleven days from that year to take care of the accumulated error of the Julian calendar."

But, friends, after the Julian calendar was revised by Gregory each week had a first day and that first day was Sunday!

But someone says: "How do we know that the first day of the week we now keep is the same day that was specified in the New Testament?" It really doesn't matter! Why? Because, regardless of the change in calendar cycles there is still a first day of every week. The only divine requirement is "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). Had

Jesus or the apostles said: "You must observe this self-same day throughout your generations" we would be in a dilemma! The Lord never commanded an impossibility! But, just as surely as we meet together on the first day of the week (Sunday) we obey Him.

We have two very interesting and helpful references which date back to within forty years of the first century. From men conversant with the Apostolic era, we find that the first day of the week was called Sunday and that it was the day of public worship.

In 120 A.D. Barnabas stated:

"We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead." Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:2 affirm that our Lord arose on the first day of the week.

In 140 A.D. Justin Martyr wrote: "But Sunday is the day which we all hold our common assembly, because Jesus Christ, our Savior, on the same day arose from the dead."

These two quotations are from the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, chapters 17 and 37.

## A Proverb To Ponder

Neal Pollard

"Now, not all our attenders are members,  
And not all our members are attenders.  
But if all our attenders were members,  
And all our members were attenders:

Then,

We would have more trouble menders,  
More Gospel Defenders,  
And More True Soul-Winners!

But,

We would have fewer people offenders,  
Fewer Spiritual Hinders,  
And Fewer Religious Pretenders!

So,

Let us all render a more tender surrender  
To the Commender of a love full of splendor!  
As we meander on this earth full of sinners,  
Let us engender a life with the Lord at the center."

## Did Apostles Gamble?

Continued From Page 1

place slips of paper in a hat), in a container of some kind, and then drawn out, or shaken out. Another way of casting lots was to write each name on a tablet, place the tablets in an urn, and shake the urn till one came out."<sup>2</sup>

3. Casting lots was simply a method of determining God's choice in this matter. "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:33).

In response to your last question, the answer is "No." "Casting lots does not authorize gambling . . . The choice of Matthias is God's choice without chance in the casting of lots. 'Chance'

would be a 'wager' or a 'gamble.' God does not act by chance, and men do not live by chance. To insist that men live simply by chance is to deny God's providence. It is wrong to gamble because God has ordained that man must live by honest work (Genesis 3:17-19)."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Albert Barnes, Notes On The New Testament, v. 10, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Gareth L. Reese, "The Church in Jerusalem," A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On The Book Of Acts, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>L. Edsil Dale, Acts Comments, p. 23.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

May 6, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Reason To Blaspheme
- Blessings Abound  
"In God's Sanctuary"
- Spiritually Correct
- Liberality Is Blessed
- Does It Actually Say That?  
•"Most Of A Minute"
- Our Missions Is Missions

Volume 30 Number 19  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Men Waste Their Most Precious Community

**Elwood Holt**

"Millions of money for an inch of time!" cried Elizabeth, Queen of England, upon her death-bed. Reclining upon a royal couch, with ten thousand dresses in her wardrobe, and a kingdom on which the sun never sets at her feet, she, who has wasted more than half a century, would now barter her millions for an inch of time. This is the sad conclusion to many a life -- neglect, waste, procrastination, unconcern, then the death bed. Time is one of our most valuable possessions. We often say that we do not have time to do this or that, but we have all the time God ever gave us. The person who gets so busy with his stocks and bonds that he cannot think about the Lord's Church, his own salvation, and the salvation of others, will one day wish he could exchange all his earthly treasures for just a bit more time. A renowned infidel cried out on his dying bed, "I will give all that I am worth for six more months of life. Oh God, do not leave me alone. Send even a child to play with me!

The day will come when nothing else will matter and our thoughts will be either upon anticipated happiness with the Lord's redeemed or the horrors of the long and endless night of eternal punishment. An English proverb said, "Take time while time is, for time will away." Do you not often say, I

just don't know what went with the time! Oh yes, we all do. But the time went just where it has always gone. Days are the same as they were hundreds of years ago; it still takes 24 hours to make one . . . 60 seconds to make a minute. We have as much time as we ever had. It is just a matter of how we are using it. Things that we want to do, we should do now. Why? Well, the proverb already quoted says that "time will away." Another proverb says, "The fool makes up his mind after the market wagon has passed."

Have you ever seen a good housewife run out on the porch and call to the market wagon, only to watch him as he goes on out of sight because her voice was not heard? This is the way time is, too. Often, by the time our minds are made up, our opportunity is gone. In the Lord's word great emphasis is laid upon "today." We are told to "boast not thyself of tomorrow" (Proverbs 23:1). We never know what a day will bring forth, but we can rest assured that it will have its share of happiness and sadness. It is small wonder that Jesus said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We sing the song, "One step at a time, Dear Saviour." How true this is! We can only take one at a time. Some may be bigger than others, but the fact still

remains that we can only step one step at a time. You need not try to take two steps at a time for you can't. Neither can you live two days at a time. You may live a thousand more days . . . or many thousands, but you will live them day by day.

So, if you have something that you need to do, do it today. Don't put it off, for today may be your last day to live. It will be for multiplied thousands. People who have never obeyed the GOSPEL OF CHRIST, who are gambling on not just tomorrow or next week, but "something before they die," would do well to awaken to the fact that they have no perpetual lease on this life. They are gambling, not on just one day, but maybe on ten years or even more. Today is the time to say those kind words we have been intending to say to someone. Today is the time to write our aged parents, if they are alive, a love letter. Today is the day to help struggling youth. Today is the day to speak a word of appreciation to a companion or a neighbor. Today is the day to ask for forgiveness from God and those you have wronged, in word or deed. Today is the day to thatch our spiritual roofs if we have not done so. "Today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:8).

Friends, don't talk about turning over a new leaf

tomorrow. Let me encourage you to turn it over today. And, remember the words of the old sage, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, "it might have been."

Paul said, "For it is God

which worketh in you both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure" Philippians 2:13. Paul also said, "In all things we are more than conquerors through HIM that loved us" Romans 8:37. TODAY YOU LIVE

## Do We Really Love Each Other?

**Holger Neubauer**

I Peter 1:22 says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto the unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

The Apostle employs two different words that are both translated "love" in the King James version. In using two different words, Peter instructs us as to how the highest form of love will cause us to live.

First, Peter mentions their souls had been reformed as they had been morally purified by obeying the gospel. The Spirit was received upon the hearing of faith (Galatians 3:2) which is the testimony of God's holy will (Romans 10:17). This testimony led them to obeying the truth which in turn instructed them about love for one another. Peter says, that they were brought through the truth to the "unfeigned love for the brethren." Literally, their love was

"unhypocritical." They were not playing a part of an actor in a drama, but sincerely devoted to each other. The words "love of the brethren" are actually translated from one word in the original, "philadelphian," a compound in the Greek, from the words (phileo; love and adelphos; brother). The love that these spiritual brethren displayed for each other was like unto the natural sibling love found in the fleshly family.

Peter had just commended them for their obedience to the gospel that led them to an unhyprocritical love. Why then, does Peter exhort them to love one another? The difficulty disappears in the original language. The love that was openly practiced among the brethren was one of fondness, affection and friendship. But the love that Peter admonishes them to have is now a different love. This love is from the word "agapao" which refers to a

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Reason To Blaspheme

Glenn Colley

Have you considered what Nathan said to David after those penetrating words, "Thou art the man?" II Samuel 12:14 says, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

David had given an "occasion" to the Lord's enemies to blaspheme. Blaspheme literally means, "to speak against." The enemies of the Lord, then and now, are always eager to sit in the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1) and make light of the things and people of God. They exaggerate the real or imagined inconsistencies between what the righteous teach and practice. They make jest of sacred things. The "fiery darts of the wicked" are the ammunition used to weaken the cause of the Lord, and David had fueled their fire. How did he do it? By preaching one thing and doing just the opposite. He was a liar, a murderer, an adulterer, and a cheat. He had sold his integrity and his faithfulness for a moment's sensual pleasure.

It is sad when God's people sin in such a way as to reinforce and add supposed substance to the cause of the devil.

There was a day when

Jonah felt the stinging rebuke of the heathen shipmen: "Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them (John 1:10)."

There was a day when Abraham lied to Abimilech and heard some deserved rebukes from that king of Gerar: "What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done (Genesis 20:9)."

Can we today live in such a way as to promote blasphemy in others? Can we "bring reproach on the church?" Certainly so. Romans 2:21-24 says, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preacheest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you . . ."

Titus 2:3-5 instructs that older women are to teach the younger women to be

"discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, *that the word of God be not blasphemed.*" This is an important and needed lesson for today. Feminism, to the degree that it contradicts these godly characteristics of Christian womanhood, is a sinful agenda. Furthermore, when these tenants of feminism are worn by Christian women, they promote blasphemy against the word of God. The reason? Presumably because those outside of Christ will recognize, just as in David's life, and Abraham's life, and Jonah's life that the principles we claim to believe are not consistently held in our behavior.

Of course no living Christian is perfect. All Christians however, must strive to consistently practice what they preach. Surely if the world can see when we are gravely missing the mark, and they blaspheme using our life as fuel, then we can also see when we are away from God.

Be faithful, for yourself, and for them who watch you to see how Christians live. Jesus said, "Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:7).

## Blessings Abound

### "In God's Sanctuary"

Johnny Ramsey

In the seventy-third Psalm we find the writer perplexed over a very common problem -- Why do the wicked prosper? The age old puzzle had almost become an obsession with the Psalmist. In verse seventeen we find him saying: "Until I came into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end." The inspired penman was simply saying: "I was confused until God's presence pervaded my life. Then the dilemma was solved. I understood more clearly his purposes." Brethren, is it not so, with us, today?

The word sanctuary means literally: "A structure made holy by God's presence." Under the law of Moses both the Tabernacle and the Temple qualified as an earthly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:2; 9:1). But today, as Stephen proclaimed in Acts 7:48, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Jesus stressed that the place of worship was inconsequential (John 4:23, 24). The Lord doesn't abide in a special place; we make a special place for him in our hearts (I Peter 3:15). Thus, in the gospel age, Jehovah finds sanctuary in the Christian's life and in the church (I Corinthians 3 and 6). As members of the royal priesthood we ought to be found in the presence of God at all times. We should never hide from his holy presence as did Adam and Eve. Nor shall we try to sneak away from it as Saul did at the Witch of

Endor's house. It does not strengthen us to warm by the fireside as Peter did or head in the other direction like Jonah when we could wisely place ourselves in the sanctuary of God. Until we yearn for the divine presence and are found therein like Paul, David and Daniel were, we shall wander aimlessly through life (Philippians 3:8-10; Psalms 42:1; 122:1; 119:164; Daniel 6:10). Let us notice three great lessons from the text of Psalms 73:17.

(1) God Is Accessible:

It is a wonderful thing that he who made the world is not very far from each one of us (Acts 17). We can seek the Lord and find him even though he is as far above us as the heavens are the earth (Isaiah 55:6-9). We don't have to get a prayer card and stand in line like Oral Roberts' followers do. We don't have to wait for an audience with our Father as do the Roman Catholics regarding the "Pope." God is accessible now for each one of his children. We can go directly unto him through Christ Jesus our high priest. One of the most interesting scenes in the Bible is found in I Kings 18 where Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal who were unable to make contact with their pagan god. In Habakkuk, chapter two, the prophet reminds the heathen that his idols of clay, wood and stone just cannot grant a blessing. He then concludes by saying: "But

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# Spiritually Correct

Dale Jenkins

There's a hot new book on the shelves, it's sure to be a best seller. Its title is "The Politically Correct Language Handbook and Dictionary." It is written around the concept that the worst thing we can do in the socially correct 90's is offend another. The book was inspired by Donna Ellen Cooperman who took the city of New York to court to have her name legally changed to "Donna Ellen Cooperperson." The book contains mass lists of terms and updated words that are designed to take the edge off offensive terms from the past. For instance, someone without hair is no longer "bald," that might offend them. They are now "hair disadvantaged." We shouldn't be chauvinists, so those little children out playing in the snow, no longer make snowmen. They now construct "snow persons" or "snow icons." In this new socially correct society a female of 12 or 13 is no longer a girl (that has horrible and potentially detrimental connotations), she is now a "pre-woman." Don't dare be guilty of singing that once hit song, "Short People," for they are now "Vertically Inconvenienced People." If you are the boss, don't destroy the esteem of your dismissed employees by saying they were fired. They now are involuntarily leisured. The waitress at the local cafe might get all upset if you refer to them in the feminism. They along with their counter part waiters are now known as "waitrons." And my five year old can't even say that little girls are "ugly." To be correct in the 90's, he must refer to them as "cosmetically different."

From that brief listing you see that most of these are a little silly, but harmless. Delve into the book a bit further, and you'll begin to see huge flaws that have taken the edge, not off offensive terms, but that have made coloring of sinful acts weaker. Here are a few more examples. You no longer

have bad people doing things they are just "ethically disoriented." Alcoholism is no longer a sin like your grandparents taught you, according to the new style an alcoholic is "socially hindered." Even Hitler gets off light (I suppose he has relatives we wouldn't want to embarrass or affront), people like him are now referred to as "morally different." In the socially correct 90's you can't be judgmental or place blame. In fact according to the authors, there is "never anybody at fault or responsible." A serial killer like Jeffery Dahmer is to be referred to as "differently pleased."

On the other hand the language of the Bible is much clearer with these sins. Take for example the words of God to Cain in Genesis 4:7; "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin is at the door." Or the simply worded definition of James; "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Paul told those "morally different" folk in Corinth: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10). And Revelation 21:8 warns "But the fearful, and unbelieving, 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."

But God's book is just as plain in its ability to give an answer to the "sin problem" man has: Paul continued to the Corinthians ". . . ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the

name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11).

Sin is still sin, and unforgiven man (generic for all men and women) will still be lost eternally. But grace is

grace and salvation is still available. God will forgive the vilest of sinners and take his sin and wickedness as far as the east is from the west

(Psalm 103:12). It may not be politically correct language, but it is spiritually correct.

--Hamilton.

## Liberality Is Blessed

Bobby Key

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Giving is a test of our love for Christ (II Corinthians 8:8). "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:6,7).

The rich young ruler was

good at keeping the law, but when the test of liberality was applied, he went away sorrowfully. It takes great love and faith to give up something we really need and want. I'm afraid there is little sacrifice involved in much of our giving today.

Christ himself set the example of liberal giving. Matthew 25 gives a graphic picture of the final judgment. The liberal giver stands at the head of the class. The servant is blessed of the Lord. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came unto me."

God knows how we spend our money. We would all do well to re-examine our giving from time to time.

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

## Does It Actually Say That?

Mike Benson

"Does the Bible actually say that a Christian can lose his faith? If so, where?"

I appreciate the manner in which you worded your questions. "What does the Bible say?" should *always* be our appeal. Consider:

1. "Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith" (I Timothy 1:19).

•According to this passage, can a Christian's faith be made shipwreck?

2. "Having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith" (I Timothy 5:12).

•According to this passage, can a Christian cast off his faith?

3. "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (I

Timothy 4:1).

•According to this passage, can a Christian depart from the faith?

4. "Who have strayed concerning the truth, saying already past; and they overthrow the faith of some" (II Timothy 2:18).

•According to this passage, can a Christian's faith be

overthrown?

Consider:

•A person is saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

•And yet, a Christian's faith may be made shipwreck, cast off, departed from, and overthrown . . .

•Therefore, a Christian can be lost.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

People who study the Bible know there is no question that what Jesus yearns for and demands is a total commitment from people. That we must have a heart that places priorities in the same places that Jesus places them -- whether in relationships or material possessions or self-improvement or whatever. Total commitment. Luke 10:27 says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . soul . . . strength . . . and mind . . ."

Queen Victoria, touched by a sermon on the second coming of Christ by F. W. Farar said, "Dear Farar, I should like to be living when Jesus comes, so that I could lay the crown of England at His feet."

Most of us have no jeweled crowns. What we all have, however, is the capability to be a simple New Testament Christian and let the word of God control our lives.

# Our Mission Is Missions

Allen Webster

Anyone who knows much about the Bible would agree that the mission of the local church is to save souls. Jesus' mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and His body on earth today is to do the same thing. We have

understood that basic truth since we were spiritual babes. But what does that translate to in the local church and the individual Christian life?

We tend to think of evangelism in terms of statistics, entries on work

programs and financial reports. It's something some semi-strange man does in some exotic jungle or dilapidated slum. Often, we are, at best, removed from and forgetful of evangelism, and, at worst, disinterested and jealous of it.

We are generally mission-minded, but, it is fair to say, not to the extent that shows a deep-seated sacrificial willingness to see every creature taught (Mark 16:15).

Most churches have at least one missionary on their program of work, and most members are content to give a hundred a month to his work, though they do not get excited about what he is doing, or really know much about it. (Quick, what are the names of the missionaries you help support? In what countries do they serve? How many children do they have? Is it a successful work? When was the last time you specifically prayed for him, his family and the lost among whom he works?) If we have trouble answering such questions, it probably indicates we are not as involved in this part of the church's work as we should be.

Churches, like people, need to analyze priorities from time to time. There are *urgent necessities* and then there are *eternal verities*. We have to maintain a building but we cannot take it to heaven with us. We must fix the water leaks, mow grass, and pay electric bills. These are urgent necessities. They should not take up most of our business meetings and cost most of our money. Sometimes we spend money on things that are marginally necessary and then hesitate to launch out with money and energy on ideas for soul winning. This is walking by sight, not by faith.

The eternal verities are the souls of men, judgment, heaven and hell. We cannot see these things. They do not become urgent necessities unless our eyes are opened to see "fields white unto harvest" (John 4:35). Things we can physically see are easier to

work on and cherish than things we can know only by faith. But we are commanded to walk by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). Some of the old timers used to pray, "Help us live in view of eternity." This would be a good motto for a church to have -- in view of eternity.

It takes leaders who walk by faith to launch out aggressively to evangelize the whole world. They must not allow the urgent to supersede the eternal. It takes members walking by faith to support their plans with heart, soul, and pocketbook. It takes preachers walking by faith to continue to emphasize the true mission of the church and to genuinely, selflessly, work to see it happen.

What, specifically, are we doing to evangelize our town? Our state? Our nation? Our

world? Is it enough? Are we content with our efforts? Is the Lord satisfied with them? Are we ready to go to judgment with the people of our generation? What will happen to our little town at Judgment Day? As our neighbors are brought before the bar, and we look into their faces, will we see fear, anger, surprise, confidence?

I have not been able to adequately express what my heart feels about these things. I've stammered and fallen short of what needs to be said. But will you consider this carefully, thoughtfully, prayerfully? Let's put our greatest effort into things that really matter.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

## Blessings Abound "In God's Sanctuary"

Continued From Page 2

Jehovah is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him." Let us give thanks that it is even so today. God is accessible.

(2) We See Things Differently in the Sanctuary of God:

The Psalmist had a problem. He came into God's sanctuary. He left with a different perspective altogether. Being in the presence of Deity makes a vast difference. In Exodus 32 we see two men -- both servants of Jehovah -- Moses and Aaron. One has the tables of stone containing God's Law; the other has fashioned a golden calf to be used in idolatrous worship. What made the difference in Moses and Aaron? One had been in close communion with God! When our lives are filled with pressing problems and trying circumstances we should avail ourselves of the transforming power of the Lord's presence. Once we have been in a covenant relationship with our Maker and then depart, our heart is heavy until restitution has been made. We know, better than anyone else, how difficult it is "to sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalms 137:4). In the sanctuary of God our soul is at home and at peace!

(3) Blessings Result From Being In His Divine Presence:

In Isaiah, chapter six, we have a graphic picture of the power of worship unto the Almighty. This period of devotion and homage caused the prophet to place himself at God's disposal. The Lord of Hosts was exalted and Isaiah

humbled himself to carry out the will of heaven. This is the purpose of assembly worship today. Man is made better by true, spiritual worship. In the gathering of the saints we gain incentive and inspiration to "go about doing good" unto our fellow man. Private worship is also uplifting. In fact, unless we draw nigh unto God when we are all alone our religion is vain. Verily, our professed adoration is just as good as it causes us to be when no one is watching. If our personal godliness is like the Priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan we will be sadly lacking in God's sight. One major reason they "passed by on the other side" was because no one was there to applaud -- they were not in the mood and besides their work didn't call for spontaneous sympathy! How about it, brethren? When we are all alone with God does our religion have any reality to it? One of the most powerful scenes in the Bible depicts Jesus all alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, in the sublime presence of eternity he was strong enough to humbly say: "Thy will be done." He arose from the rocky soil with strength enough to do the will of the Father. We too can find a blessing from being in the sanctuary of God.

One day we shall be in the actual presence of the Creator. One day we shall know the resplendent glory of his power. May we so live upon earth in the shadow of divine love that over on the other shore we can pay eternal homage to his name!

## Do We Really Love Each Other?

Continued From Page 1

higher love, a love dependent upon an intellectual commitment to seek out their highest moral good. This love would not only motivate them to take care of their physical and emotional needs, but would also lead them to try to correct their brethren if necessary. True love of the

highest degree demands reproof and instruction as eternity is the ultimate end of each soul and we wish all to be part of that glory land (Proverbs 27:6; I Corinthians 5:1-14).

Let's have the proper love for each other and care enough to correct each other.

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May 13, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- The Somewhat Guilty Innocent Party
- Living For Jesus
- "Wrong To Eat Meat"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- "God Will Take Care Of You"
- Why Doesn't The Church Do Something?"

Volume 30 Number 20

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# The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak for the words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 26

## Seeking The Searchers

Neal Pollard

Recently, GOOD MORNING AMERICA ran a segment on worship in the 1990s. What I found when I viewed it was the predictable progress of a generation eager to "try it all." In Wyoming, individuals were gathered in a meeting to worship angels. One family's angel's name was "Bart." Over in San Francisco, a segment of that population has devoted itself to searching for the missing element in our materialistic society. The broadcaster running the segment described them as baby boomers searching for the "Unknown God." Meanwhile, in Colorado, groups gathered to perform "Native American" ceremonies. Beating her tom-toms, one lady described the group as individuals in search of "their spiritual selves." The commentary boiled down to one remark. "A generation bent on changing their society is now turning inward."

for a life preserver. As the extreme examples above prove, they find something to fill that spiritual hunger within them. New Testament Christianity, because it is the expressed will of Jesus Christ Himself, is the answer to the questions they raise. It was that gospel which Paul declared unto the searching of his day.

WORSHIPPERS OF THE UNKNOWN GOD. "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious. For as I passed by, and observed the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:22-23). From that introduction, Paul proceeded to preach 1) God The Creator (24-26), 2) Man The Likeness Of God (27-29), and 3) Christ The Savior And The Judge (30-31). "For the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21); thus, Paul capitalized on the opportunity to reach the searching in that place.

What good did Paul do among these philosophers and idolaters? True, "some mocked"(Acts 17:32), others put him off (32), but "certain men clave unto him, and believed . . ." (34). Dionysius,

Damaris, and others were reached. Believers in Jehovah came from the ranks of those who had started their day at the altar of THE UNKNOWN GOD.

WORSHIPPERS OF ANGELS. The warning of Paul to the Colossian Christians was, "let no one rob you of the prize, delighting in self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, emptily puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Colossians 2:18, McCord). The guilty ones addressed by Paul had invented their own system of worship, a part of which was changing the object of it. These people refused Christ and His way of salvation, choosing the world's wisdom as well as its values. Devoid of the divine guidance of the Word, they touched, tasted, and handled human doctrines (Colossians 2:16-23). They settled for the inferior, the irresponsible, and the irreverent.

Paul threw out the life-line to those in search of God's truth. Though these were worse than the Athenians, in that they had died with Christ and had turned back to the world (20), Paul reached out to them. Paul exhorted some confused Christians to seek heavenly things, setting their mind on things above and not on things of the earth (Colossians 3:1-4). He warned them of God's displeasure against immorality and idolatry. He reminded

them of God's pleasure in His children who put on the new man.

CONCLUSION. As the world rushes toward the twenty-first century endowed with more technology, education, and advantages than any generation previous, its "enlightened" inhabitants are building altars unto traditions and doctrines of men, material things, immoral activities, and superstitious ideologies. The object of worship for some is nature,

pleasure, and even self. A desperate, dying world reaches for something to fill a void within them. They will find something. Let us, God's people, search out the searchers. Many will scoff at the message of saving grace. Others will procrastinate themselves out of ever committing to Christ. Yet, some will be obedient to the faith. With Christ, let us "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

## Is It Possible To Understand?

Bobby Key

If the Bible is completely beyond man's grasp, how could one expect to know God and be saved eternally? Doesn't it stand to reason that the God who gave us the revelation by which one is drawn to Him (John 6:44-45), and by which he will some day be judged (John 12:48), would enable man to understand that revelation? Else, where is the hope of salvation for the average person?

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). Only through study can one "show himself approved unto God, a

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Much of our failure to understand is our unwillingness to understand. There is a failure to see which comes from the refusal to see. A man can deliberately shut his mind to truth which he does not wish to see; he can be deliberately dense toward teaching which he does not wish to accept. Nicodemus was like that. If a man does not wish to be changed, he will deliberately shut his eyes and his mind and his heart to the power which can change him. When the invitation is offered by the Lord some of

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## The Somewhat Guilty Innocent Party

Glenn Colley

There is clearly an innocent party implied in Matthew 19:9 when Jesus said, "Whoso shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marries her which is put away committeth adultery."

The one committing adultery is the spouse who puts away his wife and remarries. He is guilty of adultery. Or, the one who commits adultery while married, is divorced because of his sin, and remarries, commits adultery. Or, the one who, though otherwise innocent, marries the man who was put away for his fornication, commits adultery.

In each of these cases there is another person implied. It is the one we have called the "innocent party." We mean that he or she is innocent of the fornication. The innocence leaves open the door for divorce and another God-approved marriage. But, as we often hear from the divorced guilty spouses, "innocent" shouldn't always be considered a blanket exoneration.

It is obvious from the text that there is, in the mind of Jesus, an innocent party who is free to remarry. That much is clear, and this article is not to pour salt into the deep wounds of those who fall into that category. However, it is important to remember that while a spouse might be innocent of adultery, he or she might be guilty of contributing to the adultery

of their spouses.

Jesus said, "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh" (Matthew 18:7). Does that principle apply only to people outside our families? Doesn't it just as well apply to our relationship with our husbands and wives?

What are some ways I can contribute to the sin of adultery in my mate? Consider these:

1. The most obvious way is described in I Corinthians 7:2-5. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband . . . Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."

Spouses who withhold that intimacy which God made here an obligation of marriage, sin against their mates. Furthermore, they passively participate in the temptation to sin which their spouse will face.

2. A mate may become bitter and cruel to his spouse. According to Willard F. Harley, Jr. in his book "His Needs, Her Needs," wives of adulterous husbands are often shocked to learn that their husband's "mistress" is really unattractive physically, but

has provided an atmosphere of warm acceptance. The same could certainly apply with equal force to the husband or wife.

When we marry we make ourselves more vulnerable and open than we've ever been before. For that reason, few people, if any, have the ability to hurt us more deeply than our mates. That's the price tag of the oneness of marriage. We know our mate in some ways better than they know themselves. We know their weaknesses, their strengths, their fears and their anxieties.

Remember that the love of marriage, for the husbands and the wives, is a command and not just an emotion. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" and Titus 2:4 says, "The aged women . . . teach the young women . . . to love their own husbands. . ."

The beauty of good marriage is that someone could know me so well, and love me so much. The curse of unhappy marriage is that someone knows me so well, and is bitter and cruel toward me.

3. A marriage partner may become too busy for his spouse. Jesus said, ". . . whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery . . ." (Matthew 5:32).

How did he "cause her to commit adultery?" By woeful neglect. He left her. A husband or wife may be guilty of neglect without

actually putting away their spouse, and thereby contribute to the unfaithfulness of that spouse.

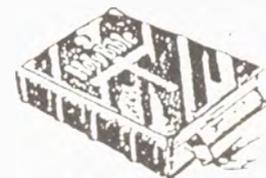
We often hear cases of men taking jobs which require lengthy separation. Gentleman, when you MUST take that kind of job, also take your wife! Occasional short separations for work may make the heart grow fonder. Long separations may put a serious strain on the mates, which gradually opens the door for a third party. The good Lord meant for husbands and wives to be together (I Corinthians 7:5)!

Good marriage is no accident. It requires a combined commitment, and love for the laws and principles of God with

regard to marriage.

This article in no way excuses the sin of adultery in marriage or in remarriage. Being married to the worst possible mate does not scripturally license divorce and remarriage. Jesus is the One who taught that God-approved divorce and remarriage can only occur when one spouse commits fornication and we put them away for that fornication (Matthew 5:31, 32; Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11, 12). However, just as in all facets of life, Christians must work to draw others closer to Christ, and not closer to sin. Help your spouse to be faithful to you. Do all you can to make yours a lifelong marriage, pleasing to God.

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# Living For Jesus

## Johnny Ramsey

A student dedicated to doing the best he can do is a delight to the teacher. A soldier that pursues his tasks with a purpose brave and true is a credit to his captain. A worker that is ardent and sincere makes the boss a happy man. Sadly, these kind of folk are few and far between. It is also difficult to find members of the church that can always be counted upon to give of their best to the Master. We have lived in a virtual welfare-society generation so long that many believe the world owes them a living. Such shallow reasoning has permeated the Lord's kingdom also. It is truly a tragedy that such a hellish philosophy has gained such a large following. Especially is this sad in view of clearly defined teaching in the Scriptures -- from cover to cover -- that urges us on to loyalty in discipleship. Notice ten of the Bible's indelible passages on the necessity of devotion and fervor:

### Verses To Ponder

I Samuel 3:9 -- I will do whatever He commands!  
 II Samuel 24:24 -- I will give generously to God's cause!  
 Philippians 3:14 -- I will press on in His service.  
 Acts 5:29 -- Obeying God comes first always.  
 Galatians 6:9 -- We never tire of pleasing Him.  
 Acts 2:42 -- Steadfast devotion is our joy!  
 Daniel 1:8 -- With purpose of heart we live.  
 Philippians 2:5 -- The mind of Christ is our goal.  
 Ezra 7:10 -- We learn His word and share it.  
 John 15:8 -- Bearing fruit for Jesus is our delight.  
 When we wisely esteem the superlative nature of Christianity and strive to excel in God's divine arrangement we gladly give our energies into a heavenly cause. Since Jesus is everything to us we do not murmur and complain but rather rejoice with the benefits and pleasures that attend the glad tidings concerning our Savior. We have a mind tuned in to God's

frequency and a golden path that leads to the land that is fairer than day!

"All the way my Savior leads me

What have I to ask beside

Can I doubt His tender mercy

Who through life has been my Guide?"

The senseless Epicurean philosophy never appeals to those who earnestly follow the Man of Galilee (Revelation 14:4). The pitfalls along the rugged journey of life never deter loyal pilgrims who press on to the heavenly frontier.

"Beautiful isle of somewhere

Land of the blue

Where we live anew

Beautiful isle of somewhere."

And, to the Christian, filled with purpose and dedication, that somewhere is heaven of which Paul eloquently spoke in the fifth stanza of II Corinthians --

"A house not made with hands,  
 • eternal in the heavens."

Just to know the Lord and the power of His resurrection is incentive enough to spur us on to glory (Philippians 3:11 and 21).

Christ, our loyal friend (John 15:13), in deep concern for others (Mark 16:15), challenges us to fervent commitment for the souls of lost mankind (John 4:35). How we need to heed the call and lead lost souls to the gracious Redeemer!

"Lovingly, tenderly calling is He

Patently waiting there

Standing I see

Jesus, the Savior divine."

There are at least four blessed things about Christ we should forever adore.

His Cross - Galatians 6:14

His Commands -- John 15:14

His Church -- Ephesians 3:21

His Coming - Revelation 22:20

The Savior is near and dear to us because He is the one and only mediator between men and God (I Timothy 2:5). This gives us boldness and

encouragement to take our prayers to the Father through Jesus Christ, our friend and elder brother in the family of heaven (Romans 8:17). The very One born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) is precious to us because of the once for all time sacrifice He made for us at Golgotha (Hebrews 9:28; 10:12). He is our example of righteousness that compels us to follow in the steps that lead

to glory (I Peter 2:21). He is our forerunner to heaven above (Hebrews 6:19) and the only indispensable person who has ever been upon this earth (II Corinthians 5:14 and 8:9). Thanks be unto God for such an unspeakable gift! With rich resolve and definite dedication let us serve Him diligently every step of the way.

"Beyond this desert dark and drear

The golden city will appear  
 And morning's lovely beams arise

Upon my mansion in the skies

Beyond the sunset's radiant glow

There is a brighter world I know."

What grander, nobler purpose could ever occupy our attention in time or eternity? Let us glorify God in all that we do!

## "Wrong To Eat Meat?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"A friend of mine recently told me that it was wrong to eat certain meats because God considers them unclean. Some passages in the Bible seem to say this, and yet others appear to teach differently. Which is right?"

Your friend has an idea that is held by many people today. Let me encourage you to study this question with him/her in light of the following:

1. Under the Old Testament God's people were forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and animals. "And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, and that chews the cud, among the animals. Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, such as these: the camel, the hare, the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they are unclean for you. Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud . . . And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you" (Deuteronomy 14:6-8, 10). See also Leviticus 11.

2. However, we are not under the authority of the Old Testament. It was fulfilled (Matthew 5:17), abolished, and then nailed to the cross of Christ. "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, as to

create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:15). "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6). See also Colossians 2:14.

3. Therefore, since we are under a new covenant, the New Testament of Christ (Hebrews 9:16, 17), these regulations are no longer binding on us today. In fact, the Bible says that to command others to abstain from certain foods is a doctrine of demons, and thus a departure from the faith.

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (I Timothy 4:1a, 3).

We should enjoy and appreciate ALL the food that God has provided for us. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I Timothy 4:4-5). See also Acts 10:15.

For an answer to your Bible question write:

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

A national magazine recently ran a full-page ad with perforated edges to make it easy to cut out. The bold letters at the top read, "Contract for Life," and was described as the Against-driving-drunk-contract between parent and teenager. Here is the teenagers agreement to his/her parent: "I agree to call you for advice and/or transportation at any hour, from any place, if I am ever in a situation where I have been drinking or a friend or date who is driving me has been drinking."

Now, understand me . . . I wouldn't necessarily discourage this. Anything to save lives from the blood-thirsty bumpers of the drunk-drivers' automobiles would be good. Here's what concerns me: With the first drink the brain begins to lose its ability to discern between right and wrong. Will a drinking teen have the sense left to call and ask for a ride? I hope so, but I doubt it.

This is but another feeble attempt to make something unacceptable into something acceptable; to make sense of the senselessness of drinking beverage alcohol. Proverbs 20:1 says "Strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." The cure for drunk driving is to strike out at what makes them drunk.

# "God Will Take Care Of You"

Allen Webster

Do you ever worry about getting your bills paid? Are you uneasy about the future? Do you find yourself concerned with physical things more than you should? There is an answer!

"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? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:30, 31, 34).

In this section Jesus is condemning *worrying* over future needs, but not planning for the future (II Thessalonians 3:16, 17; I Timothy 5:8). Surely, God could not be charged with watching out for sparrows and neglecting His children! Benjamin Franklin, the great patriot, exclaimed before the Constitutional Convention that gave birth to the United States of America, "God governs in the affairs of man; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" (Coffman). One's life is of greater value than the nourishment it uses, and the body is worth more than the clothing it wears. God has provided us with the greater things, is it not wise to trust Him for the lesser ones (Matthew 10:29-31; cf. Romans 8:32)?

## GOD'S TRACK RECORD

When one is looking for a firm to help advise about financial investment, usually the first question he asks is, "What kind of track record do they have?" He wants to know what they have done in the past because it is a good indicator of how successful they will be in the future.

God has a good track record! He has always met the physical needs of His

children. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve had the fruit of the Garden (Genesis 2:16, 17); the children of Israel had manna and quail (Exodus 16:12-14); priests ate part of the offering (Leviticus 8:31); Elijah was fed by ravens (I Kings 17:4-7); and Elisha and the widow ate from a barrel that never emptied (II Kings 4:1-7).

In the New Testament, five thousand ate from five loaves and two fish (Matthew 14:17-21) and more than four thousand were nourished by seven loaves and a few fish (Mark 8:5-9). Widows were to be cared for under specific guidelines (I Timothy 5:9-10) and the fatherless were to be the object of helpful visits (James 1:27).

## GOD'S SUCCESSFUL PRESENT PLAN

Since God has such a past track record, does one suppose that He would cease to care for the physical needs of His people in the present (cf. Matthew 6:8, 11, 33; 7:11)? Of course not! He has an excellent plan for meeting all their needs.

God no longer sends ravens with lunch or multiplies small fish into a quantity sufficient for a large lakeside picnic (cf. I Corinthians 13:8-10)! But God does still provide for the physical needs of His people. Generally speaking, God provides for them by giving one health and ability to earn a living (cf. I Timothy 5:8).

If for some reason one is unable to earn his own living (sickness, injury, retardation, temporary unemployment), his family is to see that his needs are met (I Timothy 5:16). In the event that the family is unable (non-existent, financially limited) or unwilling (selfish, unloving), then the church is instructed to assist them (I Timothy 5:9, 10).

## GOD'S INSURANCE POLICY

God's record is so sure that He even provides a care-free insurance plan. He does not want His policy holders to have to fear about their

investments, so He has given safeguards against worry.

How do Christians keep from worrying? (1) *By investing time in working instead of worrying.* Ants do not waste time worrying about the future. Instead, they work constantly to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6). (2) *By seeking to fulfill needs instead of wants.* God has promised to fulfill all the Christian's needs, not necessarily all his wants (Philippians 4:19). "If you worry about missing the boat, remember the Titanic" (Reader's Digest).

(3) *By concentrating on today instead of yesterday and tomorrow.* Philippians 3:13 teaches one to forget the things of the past. Matthew 6:34 teaches that each day has enough trouble of its own. A little old lady said, "I always feel bad, even when I feel good, because I know that it will not be long before I will feel bad again."

God wants us to walk in the light He gives us, and not worry about the darkness beyond. When we get there, His light and help will make it clear. When we drive our cars at night, the headlights do not shine all the way to the destinations. They shine just a few feet in front of the cars, but as we move forward, they keep ahead of us. God's light works the same way. The Master is saying, "Live one day at a time."

(4) *By focusing thoughts on God instead of problems.* Martha was troubled about many things, but Mary was sitting at Jesus feet (Luke 10:38-42). Which was commended? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). We must learn to live what is stamped upon our coins, "In God We Trust" (Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 9:10). God is unlimited in what He can do (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19). A minute of prayer is better than an hour of

worrying (Philippians 4:2). We read where Jesus spent an entire night in prayer, but never where He spent one minute in worry.

Yes, God has promised to take care of us. We need to trust Him every day and all the way to heaven.

## Why Doesn't The Church Do Something?

Glenn Louis Robb

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." -- John 9:4

The spiritual poverty in this world is shocking. People are depressed, discouraged, disoriented, lost. All of us know someone who needs visits, counseling or classes. We all know families with physical needs. Imagine those beyond our personal acquaintances. There are many many more. There's certainly no lack of work. And here's a question I get regularly in my work: "Why doesn't the church do something?"

It just so happens that the church is me! The church is you! Not one of us will ever be able to do everything. God doesn't even expect that. The kingdom of God is not made of super heroes. It is made of normal people, like me, like you, accepting one task or service that can be accomplished.

I'm so thankful for the Christians who are working. Your effort is worthwhile. Do not be discouraged. Thanks to you who are teaching in the Bible school, in the nursery, in coordinating the benevolence ministry, in planning special events of the church, in preparing Christian literature,

in leading Bible studies and devotionals, in making visits, in cleaning up, in planning or directing worship services, or in whatever other good work. Your service is important.

And yet there's much more to do! We need more teachers for personal Bible studies, more Sunday school teachers, more correspondence course teachers, and more help in many other areas. This world always needs someone to speak a good word for Jesus. Every one of us can at least do that.

Don't sit idly wondering why in the world the church doesn't do something. Seek out a good work and do it right away. Let us work while it is still day.

--Belo Horizonte, Brazil

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## Is It Possible To Understand?

Continued From Page 1

us could say if we were honest, "No thank you: I am quite satisfied with myself as I am, and I don't want to be changed."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall

be filled" (Matthew 5:6). This is God's promise to all men everywhere. The common people still hear Him gladly, surely the average person can understand His message.

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

May 20, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- The Fullness Of Christ
- The Tears Of Christ
- Some Things That God Does Not Expect
- "Understandest Thou What Thou Singest?"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- God's Family

Volume 30 Number 21

(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

the

## A Small World

Allen Webster

Imagine that our world had been reduced proportionately to a theoretical town of 1,000 people. It would have 22 Americans, and 978 persons representing the rest of the world. But the 22 Americans would have about half the income of the entire town.

About 331 persons would be classified as "Christians" in the broad sense and 190 of these would be Catholics. There would be 164 non-religious people. Our neighbors would include 188 Moslems, 135 Hindus, 57 Buddhists, 44 atheists, and 30 Jews. By rounding up, there would be one New Testament Christian.

There would be 303 white people in our town, and 697 non-white. The 22 Americans would have an average life expectancy of 70+ years; the others of 40. Americans would own at least 15 times as many possessions as the rest and would spend an average of \$850 a year on military defense, but less than \$4.00 to teach Christ to others.

Our "town" is what Jesus had in mind when He said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

How can we teach a thousand souls? How many of the Hindus can we convince

that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4)? How many of the atheists can we convince that *there is a God* (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 53:1)? Can we show the Muslims who God is (Jehovah, not Allah, Exodus 6:3; Acts 17:23)? Will they accept Christ as the last Prophet of God, instead of Mohammed (Hebrews 1:1-3; Jude 3)?

How many of the Jews can we convert to Christ, the Messiah promised in their Old Testaments (Acts 2:36; Galatians 3:24)? How many of the Catholics can we convince to give up tradition and worship neither man nor icon (II Thessalonians 2:3, 4; I John 5:21)? How many of the Protestants can we convince to give up the doctrines and commandments of men (Mark 7:7-9)? How many of the secular can we convince to prepare for eternity instead of living for today (Matthew 16:26; Luke 12:16-21)?

We must use every available method. Some of us can go door to door. The knowledgeable can teach after work one night a week. Others can talk up the church at work and invite neighbors across the back fence. We can mail religious material and get on radio and television. We must preach, preach, preach.

Some of us will have to learn to speak their languages and study up on Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. Race and nationality can make no

difference to us. We may have to sacrifice some of our possessions and increase our contributions. It costs to teach a whole town. Since many of them will die in middle age,

We should rise up from our beds with God uppermost in our hearts. We should take Him with us as we go to our respective jobs. I verily believe that the Lord will bless those who put their trust in Him. The Bible teaches us that He will, and by faith we are to do our part, then trust in Him for the promises.

A Sunday-school teacher, after telling the story of the rich man and Lazarus to a class of boys, asked this question, "Boys, which would you rather be, the rich man or Lazarus?"

One boy promptly replied, "I would be the rich man while I live, and Lazarus when I die!" This, my friends, is the choice that millions make, or think they can make. Nothing, however, could be more impossible. We cannot have the things of this world while we live and the things of God when we die. Oh, I do not mean that we cannot enjoy this world. We can. It is a beautiful world and we all love it. We love the clouds,

we must hurry.

Whether or not we corner our "town" depends on amount of our love, strength of our faith, the depth of our convictions, and

## The Answer To Our Soul's Needs Is The Things Of God

the breezes, the green meadows, the hills, the lakes, the birds, our friends; there are places we like to go and things we like to do, and the Bible does not mean that we have to give up all of these in order to serve our God.

When John says, "Love not the world," (I John 2:15) he does not mean the world I have just described. He means the sinful world. Of course there are places I can't go and things I can't do, but the psalmist exclaimed once, "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." I believe this with all of my heart. God will not take the good things of this life from us. He made them for us. He wants us to enjoy them. But, there are things that people claim they enjoy that God forbids. In reality, they do not enjoy them very long. They think they will, but when the later years come they find out that they ate the husk which the swine refused when they could have been feasting all the while on the

our endurance. They were able to get the whole "town" in (Colossians 1:23), God's help, so can we (as 8:31)! It's a small world -- and it's lost.

good grain supplied by the Father.

There are too many who want the sinful things of this life while they live, then want the divine approbation of the loving Father when they die. It just cannot be. Heaven is a place that we will enjoy only if we prepare for it.

There is a poem entitled: "Homesick in Heaven." People who are not prepared for that wonderful land would be homesick if they were to go there. They would not be prepared for it. They would not enjoy it. A person cannot live for the devil in this life, then suddenly accept everything of the opposite nature and be happy and content with it. No, if we enjoy the glory land it will be because we are prepared for it. Can you sing, "I'll be no stranger there?" Unless you can, I fear you will not be there. We will not be strangers if we are prepared to stand before God. Are you?

We cannot live like the rich

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## The Fullness Of Christ

Glenn Colley

Colossians 1:18, 19 says, "And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."

Consider the fact that in Christ "all fullness" dwells. What is the scope of God's ability to embrace and bless man? What is the length, breadth, and height of His love? How wide is His capacity to care for our needs both in this life and in the next? If you take the infinite answers to these questions, and add them together, the sum total would be the fullness of God. That is, all He is, and all He has to offer. The fullness. The imprisoned apostle tells us that in Jesus all fullness dwells.

"Fullness" is a word used elsewhere in the scriptures by Paul. In I Corinthians 10:26 he wrote, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." In Ephesians 3:19 he wrote, "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." As Christians our goal is to be like Christ. Ephesians 4:13 says, "Till

we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

There are three verses concerning fullness which we want to particularly notice.

First, consider Colossians 1:19, the leading verse for this article. About this phrase Albert Barnes wrote, "This is to us a most precious truth. We have a Savior who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation which He is not qualified to do; there is nothing which we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which He is not able to impart. We may go to Him in all our troubles, weaknesses, temptations, and wants, and may be supplied from His fullness -- just as if we were thirsty, we might go to an ocean of pure water and drink" (Barnes commentary on Colossians 1:19).

Second, Jesus is the fullness of the Godhead. "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

The Godhead, or all Deity, consists of God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter. All that they are dwells bodily in Christ. In Christ therefore, the devoted Christian has all that the Godhead has to offer. The Christian is full in Christ.

Third, Ephesians 1:22, 23 says of Christ, "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, where is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Christ is the fullness of the Godhead, and the fullness of Christ is in His church. Let those who seek to change the church beware of this reality. The purity of Christ's church must be considered sacred. It is worth contending for, (Jude 3). The fullness of Christ doesn't come in man-made religion, nor through the human-made creeds. We must give people the book, and point them to His church. That is where His fullness is found!

When you bow your head to pray, begin with a heart filled with the thought that Christ came to earth to offer you the fullness of the Godhead in His church, and be thankful.

# The Tears Of Christ

Allen Webster

"Big boys don't cry," we tell young men after they take a fall. But Jesus wept. Does that mean that He lacked manhood?

No. It has to do with the reason for the tears. Are they tears of weakness or strength? We do not know much about the personality of Jesus, though we do have some indications. We do know that He wept on three occasions. Each contains a good lesson for us.

JESUS WEPT AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS (John 11:35). The shortest verse of the Bible says a lot! It tells of Jesus' care for Martha and Mary. It tells that He is a compassionate Savior. It tells that He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15).

Mary and Martha had lost a brother and their hearts were hurting. So, Jesus "wept with those that wept" (Romans 12:15). He knew that He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, but He still felt the pain of those who hurt.

We, too, need to care enough to weep over the pain of others. Notice in this context that Mary and Martha had friends who had come to comfort them (John 11:19). We are to be tenderhearted toward one another (Ephesians 4:32).

These are tears of sympathy.

JESUS WEPT OVER

JERUSALEM (Luke 19:41-45). Try to picture this scene. This is Jesus' most glorious day, everyone is singing His praises, yet He breaks down in passionate sobs.

He had done all He could to get them to believe in Him, yet they persisted in disobedience. Now, He knows, these same voices will soon be crying out for His blood.

The city He saw faced destruction (Matthew 24) and the souls in it faced damnation (Matthew 10:28). He had come that they might have life, but they rejected His overtures (John 1:11).

He still weeps. The lost die daily unprepared for what awaits them. They are sinners needing salvation and many do not even know it. Others do not care. We must tell them. We must help them to care.

Are we weeping over them? Jesus let His tears drive Him to Calvary. Ours should drive us to seek the lost (Mark 16:15).

These are tears of sorrow.

JESUS WEPT IN GETHSEMANE (Hebrews 5:5-7). This shows Christ's humanity. He did not want to suffer the humiliation, pain, and separation at Calvary. He prayed that there might be some other way, but there was

Continued On Page 4

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# Some Things That God Does Not Expect

W. A. Holley

(1) God does not expect us to live perfect and sinless lives. To live a perfect and sinless life is impossible (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; I John 1:6-10). These verses do not teach that we should not try to live perfect and sinless lives because perfection should be the goal of every Christian (Hebrews 6:1; Matthew 5:48). One preacher said, "I have not committed a sin in 25 years," but he sinned the moment he made this outrageous claim. Repentance is needed (Luke 13:3-5).

(2) God does not expect the Christian to be without enemies. Jesus and the apostles had very dangerous enemies. Hence, the Christian is often warned to be on guard, prepared to withstand persecution (II Timothy 3:12; Matthew 5:43-47). Many Christians have suffered as martyrs for Christ's glorious cause (Revelation 2:12-13; 2:10).

(3) God does not expect us to do that which we cannot do. We have a duty to do what we can (Luke 17:10). Some Christians worry because they cannot do everything. You may never preach a sermon, teach a class, lead the singing, but each has different talents that must be used -- great or small (Matthew 25:14-30). Buried talents accomplish nothing. It is folly for us to offer excuses (Luke 14:15-24). The sin of negligence is a great destroyer (James 4:17).

(4) God does not expect us to go to heaven on the basis of our own goodness, but He does expect us to be as morally good as is possible (Galatians 5:19-21; 6:7-9). Many say, "I'm not good enough to be saved." Who is? No one can be good enough, morally, to be saved. If one could he would not need the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is in Christ (II Timothy 2:10). God expects us to obey Him

and His gospel (Mark 16:15-16; Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 1:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Acts 2:1-4, 35-38, 42-47; Romans 6:3-4). Cornelius was a good moral man, but he did not become a Christian until he obeyed the word of God as preached by Peter (Acts 10:1-47; 11:13-14).

(5) God does not expect us to do some great thing to be saved. We do not have to fly to the moon, or cross the sea, or make international headlines to be saved. But God does expect rational people to obey the truth of the gospel to be saved (Matthew 7:21-27; I Peter 1:22).

(6) God does not expect us to know everything, but God does expect us to know His truth (John 8:30-32). But truth perverted is not truth at all -- it becomes a lie (II Thessalonians 2:9-12; Galatians 1:6-10).

Many become discouraged because they cannot "know" everything. On the other hand some think ignorance is bliss. They say, "If I don't know I will not be held accountable." This is the devil's lie (Leviticus 5:17). If preaching the truth of God to a man is what makes him a sinner, then we would do him a favor by withholding the gospel of Christ from him. He then will be saved in his ignorance. Sinners are already lost (John 3:18), but it takes the power of the gospel to save them (Romans 1:16-17).

Verily, we need not know how God created the world, Adam and Eve, or sent the great flood, or destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, or how God will raise the dead, but we must believe that God possesses such power (Hebrews 11:3, 6).

(7) God does not expect YOU (individually) to preach the gospel to every creature. But He does expect each Christian to be working at this tremendous job. For example, God does expect me to do a

good job of preaching the gospel to others in my own little world. Man lives in his own little microcosm, hence, he should meet his duties there. If you cannot cross the sea, you can cross the street. A soul saved across the street is as precious as a soul saved across the wide Atlantic. Christian friend, how many souls have you led to the Saviour? Will there be any stars in your crown (Daniel 12:2-3).

(8) There are some things God does expect of you. God expects all accountable people to reverence, honor, and fear Him and His word (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14;

Colossians 3:16-17; I Corinthians 10:31-33).

Parents should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children should honor and respect their parents (Ephesians 6; Colossians 3:20; Proverbs 6:20; 7:1).

God requires parents to make the church important in the lives of their children. Truly, children soon know whether or not the church is important in the lives of their parents. What can parents expect when the church, the preacher, the elders, are constantly criticized in the presence of the children? When parents seldom attend the services of

the church how can they expect their children to be interested in religious affairs? This principle is stated in Ezekiel 16:44-45.

Crime is rampant in our society because we have a generation of parents who have failed their children. To have better children we must have better parents. Many parents know how to grow pigs or cows but they do not know how to grow children. Somehow discipline must be restored and only parents who care can supply it.

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

## "Understandest Thou What Thou Singest?"

Dub McClish

Paul indicated that we should sing both with the spirit and understanding as we praise God and His Son (I Corinthians 14:15). The context of this passage shows that some were singing in a language not understood by others, hence they could not sing with understanding. Sometimes we sing words that may as well be in a foreign tongue for all of the understanding we have of their meaning. Such misunderstandings are caused by several factors, including figures of speech, archaic terminology, terms that are not archaic, but are seldom used, failure to properly read a word and ignorance of Bible teaching alluded to in a song. Hopefully, the following will help us better understand what we are singing.

In the song, "Higher Ground," we sing of "heaven's tableland." This refers to a broad, level area, such as a plateau, which will be above this world and all its cares and trials.

In the song, "It Came Upon

The Midnight Clear," the second verse speaks of "cloven skies," which does not refer to a spicy aroma, but to skies that are opened up and separated.

In "The Great Physician," we sing of the "seraph song."

"Seraph" is an abbreviated term for "seraphim," high ranking angels (Isaiah 6:2, 6).

When we sing the "Rose Of Sharon," we are not singing of a girl who has a thorny-stemmed flower. Sharon is the name of the plain along the

Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

If you go to any lumber yard today to purchase lumber for home projects, you may get a surprise. Let's say, for example, that you need a piece of 2" by 4" for what your building. You may go to the store advertising 2x4's for sale, and you may even go to the counter and say, "I want to buy a 2x4. But when you get home and measure your new material, do you know what you'll have? You'll have a 2x4 that actually measures about 1-1/2 x 3-1/2.

Now, 2x4's used to be 2" x 4". But, as time passed by, sawmills and builders evidently decided that they could make do with less and save money, so, they cut them smaller and just kept the same name.

This unfortunately, is too often the very picture of some churches today. While it's true that wearing Christ's name as Christians is indispensable, wearing the name without practicing His religion, is worthless. II John 9 says, "Whoso transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."

We test the measurement of our timber with a yardstick or ruler. We measure our religion, regardless of what people may call it, by the "Good Book."

# "Understandest Thou What Thou Singest?"

Mediterranean Seacoast stretching from Mt. Carmel northward and to Joppa southward. "Jesus, Rose Of Sharon," is based upon the statement in Song of Solomon 2:1. "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." It is intended to figuratively convey the attractiveness of Christ.

If you shout and sing "Hosannas" to Christ, just what are you doing ("Just Over In The Glory Land")? "Hosanna is actually a Greek word spelled in English letters (transliterated), meaning, "Save, we pray!" It was the cry of acclamation that went up from the multitudes that accompanied the Lord into Jerusalem at His . . . "triumphant entry" (Matthew 21:9).

A prophet whose pillow was a stone is mentioned in "Mansion Over the Hilltop." This "prophet" was Jacob who was fleeing from the wrath of Esau and pillowed his head on a stone at Luz (or Bethel), a place he passed through on his way to another land (Genesis 28:10-19).

In "Wonderful Love Of Jesus" we sing of raising "lays to Jesus in praise." "Lay" is an archaic term for a song, thus, this hymn speaks of our attempts to praise Christ with spiritual songs.

When we sing "Ivory Palaces" we sing in the second verse that "aloes had a part" in Jesus' life. Aloys, a perfume made from the oil of a tree, was provided by Nicodemus to prepare the body of Jesus for burial (John 19:39) and thus it symbolizes the sorrow surrounding His death.

"What is an "Ebenezer" ("Oh Thou Fount Of Every Blessing")? The word means "the stone of help" and it refers to a stone Samuel erected as a memorial of God's miraculous help to Israel in routing the Philistines (I Samuel 7:10-12).

In "Give Me The Bible" we sing of the "glory gliding

Jordan's wave" (some misread it as "gliding" instead of "gilding"). That which is gilded is overlaid with gold. "Jordan's waves" is a figurative reference to death; as Israel had to literally cross the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land, so we must all die to gain Heaven. Death holds men in fear, but the promises and comforts of God's Word make even death attractive as though gilded for the faithful saint.

## What My Minister Hopes To See From Me

1. My presence and attention at each service.
2. My prayers that God will strengthen him, and give him a generous portion of wisdom that he may be used mightily in his ministry.
3. My whole-hearted support of every good work.
4. My understanding of his needs and problems, and my respect for the great work he has undertaken.
5. To remember that while he is God's spokesman, he is still very human and makes as many mistakes as I do.
6. To refrain from undue criticism or from being a party to gossip that would hinder his work.
7. To support him and his family, and be considerate of their time.

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Continued From Page 3

If you won a "Guerdon" (Beautiful Isle Of Somewhere), would you know what you had won? "Guerdon" simply means a reward and refers to the promise of God to reward His children in Heaven, that poetic "Beautiful Isle Of Somewhere."

"Tis Midnight And on Olive's Brow" has two expressions that some may miss. First, "Olive's Brow" does not refer to the forehead

of Popeye's sweetheart! Just east of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley, is the Mount of Olives ("Olivet") upon whose side ("brow") is the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus retired there with His apostles and prayed His prayers of agony on the eve of the Crucifixion (John 18:1; Matthew 26:36). Second, the last verse of the song speaks of the "ether (not either) plains," which is a figurative reference to the vast regions of space or Heaven.

What is "Ebon Pinion" in "Night, With Ebon Pinion"? "Ebon" refers to the color black (as "ebony"). A "pinion" is the wing of a bird. The setting of this song is the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ. This series of events was so dark and somber that it was thought a great black bird, bearing doom, had cast its shadow over the Lord as He knelt in Gethsemane, was betrayed, tried and finally crucified.

## "God's Family"

God's family is the title of a song that I think has some wonderful words. Some of the words say we're the ones that have been born again and this is true. We are the people who believe that God's word teaches that baptism is this new birth. Other words, "When a brother meets sorrow we all feel his grief." And this is also true. We are a people who care when others are hurting. Other thoughts in the song say sometimes we laugh together, we sometimes cry together, we share, we dream together.

Then the song suggests that we are a people on their way home. By this we mean that we are on our way to Heaven. Yes, brothers and sisters, think of how wonderful it's going to be when we all get to

heaven, God's family. I'm glad that I am a part of that family and enjoy being with God's people here on earth, but I look forward to being with God's family in Heaven.

## The Tears Of Christ

Continued From Page 2

not (Matthew 26:42; Mark 14:32-35; Luke 22:40-44).

He knows when our pillows are wet with tears of heartache and dread of the future. We can cast our cares upon Him

for He cares (I Peter 5:7). May our troubles also drive us to the Garden of prayer.

These are tears of struggle.

Big boys do cry -- if its for the right reason!

## The Answer To Our Soul's Needs Is The Things Of God

Continued From Page 1

man in this life and enjoy the fellowship which Lazarus enjoyed when he died. You can read of these characters in Luke 16. Check the story before you forget it. One had everything in life but nothing in death. The other had nothing in life but everything in death. The rich man had his friends, his banquets, his parties, and his power in this life. He had nothing when he died. The beggar had not a

friend, save the dogs that locked his sores, and no food sufficient for his satisfaction, for he cried for the crumbs from the rich man's table. But in death, which was a blessed relief, he had the joys that are unspeakable. Which of the two do you prefer to be?

The rich can be saved only if they trust in God and not in their riches. Then they will be rich in the true riches, not in

the perishable ones. We must live here just like we expect to live in heaven. This is the proving ground.

The ornaments of this world cannot warm us when we are cold. The answer to our souls needs is the things of God. Have you tried them?

It is wonderful to live for the Lord. It is more wonderful to die in Him.

May 27, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- What Jesus Is To Christians
- The Gospel Is Truly For All
- "Woe Unto You"
- Vision For A Christian Church
- "Most Of A Minute"
- It's Up To Us

Volume 30 Number 22  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

## Jesus Built The Church

### Bobby Key

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalms 127:1). "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

Every religious organization was founded by some group of individuals. The church of the New Testament was built by Jesus. Following Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:16, 18).

Since Jesus is the founder of the church this means that the church was not founded by Adam, Abraham, or Moses. Abraham was a great example of faith, and the father of those who believe, yet Abraham built no church. I have before me a book which states that the church was founded by Adam. The author reasons that Adam was the first man to be saved, and therefore God added him to the church. This is somewhat absurd!

We honor Moses because of the great role he played in God's dealings with men. He was privileged to be in the presence of God when the law was written on tablets of

stone. He was the mediator of the Old Covenant. The law which God gave through Moses to ancient Israel was a "schoolmaster" or "tutor" to bring people to Christ (Galatians 3:19-24). We are not under this tutor today. Neither do we look to Moses as the founder of the church.

John the Baptist was not the founder of the New Testament church. John was already dead when Jesus made the promise to build His church (Matthew 14:1-12). John's work was to prepare the way for the Lord (Matthew 3:3). It is true that John was a great man. Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11). Those who are in the kingdom are greater than John because he lived and died before the kingdom was established. The church and the kingdom are the same. According to Colossians 1:13, God was already translating people into the kingdom. The saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). And the saved were "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son." What a privilege to be a part of the church Jesus built.

There are many churches established as a result of the teaching of various religious leaders. We admire Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell, and others for their zeal and for their courage in opposing

religious error. These men are not founders of the New Testament church. The church did not belong to them, neither does the church belong to you. Christ died for the church. He gave His blood for it. It belongs to Him.

We plead with people of good will to abandon all human creeds, whether written or unwritten, and accept only the authority of Christ in religion. Those who accept Christ and His words, accept His mercy and grace,

## Now I'm Grown. But Did I Grow?

### Floyd Rogers

This is the time of year that many young men and women look forward to. Graduation. A time for parents to be proud; a time for young men and women to say, "I've done it. Can you believe it? I've done it!"

Perhaps in the mind of many graduating students is this sentiment: "I'm grown. I can finally do my own thing."

There are many ways in which we can grow. Could it be that sometimes we think age and body are the only growing concepts?

I Peter 2:1, 2 says, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Peter says that in order for Christians to grow in the word there has to be a

and obey His gospel are saved. The saved are added to His church. People can simply be Christians and followers of Christ. As the pioneers before us, we urge everyone to embrace no book but the Bible, to have no creed but the Christ, to wear no name but the divine, to have no plea but the gospel, to have no aim but to be saved. In Christ, let there be unity. In opinion, let there be liberty. In all things, let there be charity.

### Our Aim

Every Christian should be devoted to the restoration of New Testament Christianity. We have no desire to be another denomination, but rather to urge people to return to the simple gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire that ultimately the church for which Christ died may supercede all the movements of men, and that His people may be one in every sense of the word.

desire. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . ."

Young people, have you desired to remember our God, His son, and His words in your everyday life? Have you considered all those days when you really felt like life just was not fair? In the back of your mind you hopefully remembered what is written in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

If you have this desire then you are well on your way to really growing. Growing in age and body does not mean that you are grown. I know many who are 50 or 60 who are not grown. They have the age, but are still missing so much.

Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Let's notice the three ways in which Jesus grew.

**WISDOM.** Wisdom is the knowledge of how to regulate one's relationship with God. Wisdom would also effect my behavior with other people. Do we forget sometimes the feelings of others? If you are not considering the feelings of others then you are not growing. James 3:17 says, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle (considerate), and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Jesus was considerate of the feelings of others. People of the world think of "self," what

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## What Jesus Is To Christians

Glenn Colley

Occasionally we all need to be able to pick up the Bible and find a passage which will offer immediate strength to pull us through turmoil. Have you considered the first chapter of Colossians? You might make notations in your Bible of the following so you can easily remember these valuable truths.

In this remarkable chapter Jesus is presented and admired from seven different perspectives. Consider them today:

**He is our Redeemer.** Verse 14 says, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." To redeem means to "buy back." To forgive means to view the forgiven as he was viewed prior to his sin. This forgiveness and redemption is found in the church of Christ, His kingdom. He died to establish His church (Ephesians 5:25). We are baptized into His death (Romans 6:1-5). It comes as no surprise then that when we are baptized we are also added to His church (Acts 2:47). I Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

**He is the image of God.** Verse 15 says, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." John tells us that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). When you have seen Jesus, you have seen God, (John 14:9). When seeking God, therefore, seek Jesus (John 14:6).

**He is our Creator.** Verse 16 says, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in

earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him." Some today believe and teach that Jesus was a created being. This passage renders that idea absurd. If all created things were made by Him, then He could only be a created being if He created Himself! Knowing Jesus is our Creator makes the cross all the more meaningful and motivating. John 1:3 says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

**He is the body's Head.** Verse 18 says, "And He is the head of the body, the church; Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence." The fact that Jesus is the first-born doesn't suggest that He had a beginning and is therefore not eternal, nor that He had a beginning and is therefore not eternal, nor that He was the first one to come from the grave. It simply points to the rank of Jesus as preferred status was given in the old time to the first-born child. There is immeasurable joy in the knowledge and resolve that Jesus is the Head of the church. What man is qualified? What man could offer as much as can Jesus as head of the body? When we work to draw people out of denominationalism, we must emphasize the headship and preeminence of Jesus Christ in His church!

**He is the Fullness of God.** Verse 19 says, "For it pleased the Father that in

Him should all fullness dwell." Fullness means "filled to capacity," or "total." I Corinthians 10:28 for example, says, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." This verse, Colossians 1:19, teaches that all God wants to give to His people is in Christ Jesus. That is a deep thought. Now add this to the picture: The church is also called the "fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). If I truly want the full goodness of God applied to my life, I will be in Christ and in His church.

**He is the Peacemaker.** Verse 29 says, And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. . . "To reconcile means to bring together two people or things which have become separated. Through Jesus God has reconciled and offered peace from heaven to the earth. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

**He is the Purifier.** Verse 22 says, "In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight." Who of us would dare to dream that we could be called "holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable?" Holy means "free from sin." Unblamable means, "spotless, without blemish." Unreprouvable means, "free from accusation; no one in judgment to accuse them."

Knowing these things, who could possibly get their own hearts consent to live away from Jesus Christ?"

## The Gospel Is Truly For All

Doug Smith

The Birmingham News on May 11, 1994 reported that Jeffrey Dahmer was baptized into Christ in a prison whirlpool "after telling a minister he wanted his sins to be washed away." Roy Ratcliff, minister of the Madison Church of Christ in Madison, Wisconsin, did the baptizing.

This very short story caught my attention so I inquired to gain further information. Was it possible that a man who has confessed to the dismemberment killings of 17 young men and boys and who is serving 16 consecutive life terms, had come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4)?

A woman in the state of Virginia who was greatly involved in World Bible School decided that someone like Jeffrey Dahmer needed the Gospel just like anyone else. So a Bible was sent along with W.B.S. correspondence courses and Mr. Dahmer completed the material and returned it. After the studies he made it known to this woman of his desire to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Several contacts were made and finally brother Ratcliff was contacted in Madison, Wisconsin. Brother Ratcliff had the chance to personally study with Jeffrey Dahmer, and once he came to the

conclusion that Jeffery understood the truth, arrangements were made and the baptizing took place on April 6. Since that time follow up studies have been done, and Jeffery Dahmer is a growing babe in Christ Jesus (I Peter 2:2). It is also interesting to know that Jeffery Dahmer and his parents attended the Church of Christ when he was a small child but quit following a divorce. There are several other details that could be given in regard to this amazing story, but this should be sufficient.

God's word is truly powerful (Romans 1:16) and is even able to penetrate the very core of a person's mind (Hebrews 4:12). Jeffery Dahmer, one of the most despicable creatures in the minds of people today because of his horrible crimes, can be forgiven by God (Matthew 6:12ff); his sins can be washed away by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7); and he can stand before God justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord (I Corinthians 6:11). Romans 8:1 declares that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Certainly baptism will not remove the consequences of sin because Jeffery Dahmer will serve 16 consecutive life

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# 'Woe Unto You'

**Johnny Ramsey**

There are many grief-filled denunciations in the Bible. Several of them fell from the lips of Jesus as he viewed the spiritual carnage of that era of time. What a shame it truly is for men to live beneath their privileges as did the *one talent man* of Matthew 25! Edmund Burke was absolutely correct:

All that is necessary for the triumph

of evil is for good men to do nothing.

In a notable passage, in the ninth chapter of I Corinthians, Paul straightforwardly wrote:

Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.

Yes, a failure to share truth with our fellow men is a travesty upon the religion of the Savior. We dare not compromise the message and we dare not be ashamed of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:7). Lost humanity will die in sin and be forever lost if we are indifferent to their needs. Verily, if our gospel be hidden, it wars against our neighbors (II Corinthians 4:3). We have been put in trust with the glorious story of redemption (I Thessalonians 2:4). Since we cannot teach what we have not studied it is incumbent upon us to learn the grand old story of our Savior's love and be always alert to pass it on to millions groping in darkness (I Peter 3:15). Woe unto the church that forgets the great commission of our blessed Lord (Acts 8:4; Romans 10:18).

In Jude, verse eleven, another woe is pronounced upon those who follow the example of evil men. Whether it be the way of Cain, the greed of Balaam or the gainsaying of Korah, we are terribly unwise to emulate such sad characters. It is relatively easy to be a spiritual desperado but it takes the heartiest effort to discipline ourselves to walk the higher ground of godliness (Titus 2:12). Stringent rebuke awaits all who oppose purity and

magnify shallow concepts and immoral actions. As we journey through life Satan packages his dainties in bright, appealing packages of deception (Hebrews 11:25) that catch the eye of folk who seldom shop for better things (Matthew 6:33) anyway! Woe unto those who only make decisions based on flashy notions and transient delights.

In Matthew 11 our Lord warned three cities for wasting their opportunities. They squandered much of their time in lesser things and allowed the goodness of Jehovah to go unnoticed. Just as Moses missed the promised land of Canaan (Numbers 20) and Aaron missed the opportunity to be a true leader (Exodus 32) so millions today pass up the golden moments granted them to be spiritual giants.

Wasted opportunities, good you might have done, had you not stood idle, some soul you might have won.

Felix and Agrippa typify many today who pass up the joy of Christianity by refusing to obey the gospel. Eternal woe awaits them and their tribe! Read Acts 24:25 and 26:28.

In Luke 6:26 the Master pronounced a woe upon those seeking popularity rather than steadfast loyalty to things divine. Only false prophets are perennial favorites because they tell the people whatever they want to hear (Jeremiah 5:31). No principle is taught more clearly than the one emphasizing the necessity of never compromising with error (James 4:4). Pilate is a perfect example of those who desire popularity above truth. When we set out to be well-spoken of by men we wind up in bad company. Yes, with Herod, who had John the immerser beheaded, Peter who denied Christ and we even identify with Galatians 1:10.

If I were yet pleasing men I should not be the servant of Christ.

Finally, in Matthew 23,

wherein Jesus pronounced seven woes upon Jerusalem, we learn the detrimental effect we have upon others when we hinder folk from entering the kingdom of God (23:13). Could any denunciation be more solemn than to be told in Judgment Day that we had kept others from being redeemed in the blood of Jesus? How did the Pharisees do such a dastardly thing?

(1) Hypocrisy

(2) Influence

(3) Stubbornness

(4) Teaching Against Truth

(5) Minimizing Important Matters

They were scrupulously honest in the smallest matters while overlooking justice, mercy and faith! Like sectarian preachers of today, they held back certain pertinent points and stressed their own views as they chose their ideas rather than eternal principles to instruct the

people. That is exactly what *heresy* is -- to choose something other than revealed truth as our message. Woe unto all who deviate from what is written. May we so conduct ourselves that when we meet our Maker face to face we will hear the glad words of "Enter in" rather than "Woe Unto You!"

## Vision For A Christian Church

**Elwood Holt**

"Oh God, grant us vision . . . a vision of that glorious entity, the nation of the Redeemed, that kingdom of Heaven which comes to the hearts with you in the building of that beautiful kingdom on earth -- Thy Church, 'my church' spoken of by our divine Lord in Matthew 16:18; that church which we are trying to reconstruct in our contemporary world through faithful proclamation of Thy Word. It is not a new church or denomination, for we believe that though we are physically removed twenty centuries from those earth-shaking events which brought about the building of Christ's church, thy church is like thy beloved Son, 'the same yesterday, today and forever.' Christ's death means life for those in every age who accept His atoning grace. His sorrowful burial into the cold earth means that we can be joyfully buried -- baptized, into the body that never dies, even while we live on earth, and his resurrection assures us of a church and a happy existence that will go on and on throughout all the aeons of space, if we are faithful 'till death."

The twentieth century New Testament Church, i.e. the congregation that is sincerely following the directives of Christ, is merely an extension, a continuation of the Church

which was built in the first century. For Jesus said of that the church which he would build, that even the "gates of death" could not prevail against it. He promised that he would unfailingly and continuously be with those who would teach His gospel, baptize penitent believers, and who would teach men all He had commanded.

"God grant us a vision of the kind of church we ought to be -- a Church that preaches the gospel of Christ, that follows the will of Christ, that wears the name of Christ, that possesses the Spirit of Christ, that requires the confession of Christ, that practices the baptism of Christ, life of Christ and that reflects the

love of Christ."

A Christian church is one that is centered in Christ. Paul said, "He is the head of the body, the Church who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things, He might have the pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18).

The Glory of the Church is the glory of Christ, and unless His teachings and His way of life are reflected in the lives of the minister and members of a local congregation, that church has no glory, no power, no honor in the eyes of God, regardless of how much prestige it may have in a community.

Christianity must be based upon Christ, or it is not

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

While it's true that all of us face temptations that are somewhat peculiar to us, there are others that are quite common. For example, I think we are all tempted occasionally to tell things that really aren't any of our business.

There's a verse in the Old Testament that's interesting along these lines. It's in Ecclesiastes 10:20. "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."

When I tell something "out-of-turn" I have no guarantee that the person I told can keep from telling it. After all, I apparently wasn't able to.

James 3:2 says, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect (or complete) man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

Today let's pay particular attention to taming our words before we speak them.

# It's Up To Us

**Bruce Ligon**

Sometimes when Christians get together and discuss the work of the church there will be statements made reflecting frustration and discouragement. Maybe we think that not enough progress is being made in the work of our local congregation. Or it could be that when we evaluate our local congregation, we see there are some members who seem content to do little or nothing in the work of the Lord.

Even when we are frustrated or discouraged with the ongoing work of the church, there are certain things that we must not allow ourselves to forget. To begin with, the work of the Lord is the most important work on earth. The apostle Paul reminds Christians, "For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9). The work of the church comes from the most powerful source in the world (God), it has the most noble purpose (to make known God's truth), it has the

widest focus (it applies to and is directed toward every person), and it offers the greatest hope (eternal life in heaven). The rousing call to fervent faithfulness by the apostle Paul ought to spur each of us on in sincere service unto the Lord, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that you labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). Only as we serve the Lord can we be assured that our service is not in vain. Truly, the work of the Lord demands and deserves our very best efforts.

Another point worthy of our prayerful consideration is the kind of attitude we have toward our local congregation. If we only see our congregation as a group of people who are inferior, backward, and unconcerned, that is the way it will generally be. Such attitudes only serve to hinder and hold back the work of the church.

Solomon's statement in Proverbs 23:7 is certainly applicable as we examine our attitude toward the work of our local congregation: "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he."

Only when God's people are united on the Truth can real progress in advancing the work of the church take place. This is the picture of the Jews in Nehemiah 4:6: "For the people had a mind to work."

At this time, these people, under the leadership of Nehemiah, were involved in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Even with some things that most people view as hindrances, these people did not let these adversely affect them. This clearly tells us that these people demonstrated active determination as they went about fulfilling their divine responsibility. In seeking to advance the cause of Christ today this needs to be our

attitude. When this attitude permeates a congregation, difficulties can be overcome and responsibilities will not be neglected.

Whether or not the work of the Lord goes forward where we are depends upon each of us. All kinds of classes can be taught, sermons preached, and books read. But the final determining factor is that it's up to us. While time marches on, now is the time to serve the Lord! What will we do? --Saint Jo, TX.

**Words  
Of  
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September 30  
Through  
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## The Gospel Is Truly For All

Continued From Page 2

prison terms. He will always be looked down upon by society and will be considered one of the most horrible human beings that ever walked the earth. But Jeffery Dahmer can be forgiven of God and stand before Him justified (Romans 5:9). None of us are in a position to judge this man's thoughts or his motives in obeying the gospel. He certainly will not improve his lot with the prison system because he will be behind bars for the rest of his life.

By faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Acts 17:30), confessing Christ as God's Son (Matthew 10:32), and being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), Jeffery Dahmer has the hope of heaven when this life is over (Romans 8:24). If he is faithful until death, he, along with all the faithful of all ages, will spend eternity, forever, with God in heaven (Revelation 2:10).

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## Now I'm Grown. But Did I Grow?

Continued From Page 1

they can do for "self," and what somebody else can do for "self." Come out of self!

STATURE. To grow in size is a blessing that many don't get. Be thankful that God has something that He wants you to do. I Corinthians 6:20 says, "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

FAVOR. God's grace effects man's sinfulness and not only forgives the repentant sinner, but brings joy and thankfulness to him. Can God truly find Joy in your life? Can people find joy in being around you? These are very important questions

especially if you are about to go away to college, and will face a new environment. If you do your part, the strangers there will just be friends you haven't met yet. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."

Let us all ask ourselves this question: "Have I grown in the way of the Lord?"

Life can be so sweet if I will make every effort to grow in the Lord. "But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to Him be glory both new and forever (I Peter 3:18)."

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## Vision For A Christian Church

Continued From Page 3

Christianity at all. In the press and the pulpit alike, Jesus is maligned and attacked as a conniver, a schemer who plotted his own martyrdom, or one who planned his own execution, or else simply as a badly deceived but well-intentioned humanitarian who lived far in advance of his age.

"God grant us a vision of a Christian Church, made possible by a loving Savior, thy Beloved Son, who is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end."

Peter said, "there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privately bring in destructive heresies, denying

even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:1-3a).

False prophets build false institutions, and many are deceived and disillusioned. What a ripe and opportune time for the voice of the Restoration Movement to be heard clearly, compassionately, and convincingly communicating the pure Word of God which helps create a Christian Nation, which perpetuates a Christian Church, and which promotes a Christian world.

June 3, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Good Works
- Selfishness
- Determining The Role Of Women
- We Must Keep The Heart Pure
- Obedience Of Faith
  - "The Judgment?"
  - "Most Of A Minute"
- Marvelous Mondays At McDonalds
- Ten Ways To Improve The Church

Volume 30 Number 23  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Where Would Jesus Place Membership?

(Please read Revelation 2-3)

Allen Webster

There is about as much variety now-a-days in congregations as there is in fast-food. Churches come big and small; warm and cold; new and old. Some are entertainment-oriented; others are mission-minded. There are liberal churches, sound churches and "anti" churches. Some are active and working; others are happy just keeping the bills paid and the grass mowed.

Over a lifetime, most Christians move several times due to school, marriage and job opportunities. Usually, when a family moves into a community, they visit all area congregations to find one with which they feel comfortable and useful. They consider: faithfulness to God's word, opportunities for service, friendliness, programs of work, youth classes and activities, age make-up of membership, the leadership, the preacher, and the building's location.

If Jesus were seeking to place membership with a congregation, what kind would He choose? Once He gave an appraisal of seven churches located in same geographic area (Revelation 2-3) and, from careful study, we find what Jesus looks for in a church today (cf. Hebrews 13:8).

**Jesus Wants A Church . . .**

(1) THAT HAS NOT LEFT ITS FIRST LOVE (2:1-8).

The church at Ephesus was told to repent because of bad attitudes. God is concerned with "heart trouble" and will not accept right actions springing from insincere hearts. Christ wants his church to be friendly, warm and considerate of others. Non-Christians recognize that we are of Christ by our love (John 13:33-34). People want to be a part of a warm church where members genuinely love each other and are not afraid to show it (cf. I Peter 1:22; Philemon 1:5). All need to remember that the church is only as warm, loving, and friendly as each member!

(2) THAT IS RICH (WITHOUT MONEY) (2:8-11). The church at Smyrna did not have much money or a nice building, but Christ said they were rich (2:9). Many today look for a church that is wealthy and influential with a cathedral-like building, all-purpose gymnasium, and outward signs of prosperity. These do not impress the Lord. He would rather churches faithfully use funds to be "rich in good works" than to have big bank accounts and fancy buildings.

(3) THAT DOES NOT TOLERATE FALSE DOCTRINE (2:12-17). The church at Pergamos was too tolerant of those who taught the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. Christ said He hated these false teachings (3:15), but the persons of

Pergamos wanted "to live and let live," be "broad-minded," and "not hurt anyone's feelings." They failed to realize that they were hurting God's feelings by dishonoring His name, disregarding His truth, destroying his church, and damning innocent souls.

We are to test preachers (I John 4:1), mark those which cause divisions (Romans 16:17), be set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17), and earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3). We should not desire to be a part of a church that invites (or supports) those who are not sound in the faith (Galatians 1:6-9). God does not long tolerate those who tolerate false teachers (II John 9-11).

(4) THAT DOES NOT FELLOWSHIP THE IMMORAL (2:18-29). Jezebel worshipped at Thyatira and shamed Christ's church by her immorality (2:22-23). The Corinthian church had a similar problem with a member committing adultery with his father's wife (I Corinthians 5:1). Paul's inspired solution was, "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (5:5).

Today many churches openly fellowship those who are living in adultery (Matthew 19:9), allow immodest "pool parties" and "beach devotionals" (I Timothy 2:9; Matthew 5:28), sanction

teenagers as majorettes (I Peter 2:11), cheerleaders (James 4:4), and support dances (Galatians 5:19-21). Too few teach enough on the sanctity of marriage (Genesis 2:24) and the sinfulness of sexual activity outside of the marriage bed (Hebrews 13:4). Christ is no more pleased with this than He was with the church at Thyatira.

(5) THAT IS NOT DEAD (3:1-6). The church at Sardis had a reputation of being alive, but Jesus said they were dead. They probably were known for their social schedule, but Christ was looking for spiritual strength. Were they "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14)? Were they interested in church growth, Bible study, supporting missionaries, inviting friends to visit, building up the faith of young Christians, helping widows and orphans, and encouraging the downtrodden? Such is evidence of spiritual life.

(6) THAT "HAST KEPT MY WORD" (3:7-13). Every church was measured by the same ruler and was commended or condemned by how well they obeyed the truth. The faithful church at Philadelphia was complimented because it was neither liberal or anti, but scriptural. This should be one's first concern in choosing a church home. Is the truth taught faithfully and do the elders demand that members

obey it? If these questions can be answered affirmatively, then Christ is pleased with that church, and we can feel comfortable working and worshipping there.

(7) THAT IS NOT LUKE-WARM (3:14-22). Maintaining status quo is not enough; not going backward is not progressing; just reaching the line of scrimmage does not score touch-downs! Christ wants His people ever on the firing line, never satisfied while souls remain in Satan's clutches. A church full of Sunday-morning Christians made the Lord sick at Laodicea and still does today. Such are "spewed" from His mouth (3:15). We must be careful that the cares of this world do not slow us down in heaven's race (I Corinthians 9:26-27), that the deceitfulness of riches does not blur our vision of spiritual things (II Corinthians 5:7), and the pleasures of this world do not become more important than a favorable resurrection (Hebrews 11:10; I John 2:15-17). We must be zealous, dedicated, enthusiastic, energetic and "on fire" for every good word and work (II Thessalonians 2:17).

Christ IS choosing congregations today. No, He will not place His name on a church roll, but He is placing names on heaven's roll. He still removes candlestick and blots out sinners from the

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Good Works

Glenn Colley

Those today who cry, "We are saved by grace and not by works!" often imply something about good works which simply isn't true. It is true that we are saved by grace, but not by grace alone. We are also saved by faith, but not by faith alone. We are also saved by the works which express our faith, but not by works of faith alone. It is sad to hear preachers discount our need for grace or for good works.

To say that we must be characterized by good works to please God is scripturally obvious. Jesus taught, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Paul wrote to Titus that Jesus, "... gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). It is true to say that the people of whom Jesus approves are those who are zealous of good works.

Titus 3:8 is an important verse when considering good works. It says, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

This stands as a caution to lazy Christians. In every

congregation of Christ's people there are those who are actively involved in the work of the Lord, and those who aren't. Those who aren't involved in good works need to repent and begin maintaining good works. Preachers, according to this passage, are to affirm this command constantly. Are we doing this? Or are we cowering under the threat of disapproval from the brethren who believe works and grace never mix? They believe that grace and works are mutually exclusive, like oil and water. Little respect should go to the preacher who is brave behind closed doors with those who always take his position. We must teach the truth of God's word while never letting false teachers impede our righteous course.

Grace and works dovetail together beautifully. Here's how:

Ephesians 2:8, 9 says, "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 you are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that you should walk in them."

We are saved BY grace, and THROUGH faith. Understanding the difference between the two, and how they relate to one another is critical.

In Genesis 6 we read about God's utter disgust with the people of creation. "And

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. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (verse 5, 6). "But," the text continues, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (verse 8). Was Noah saved by grace? Certainly he was! Would all the good works imaginable saved Noah without God's sweet grace? Certainly not!

But notice, the writer of Hebrews comments on this singular event and makes this observation: "By faith Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house..." (Hebrews 11:7). Was Noah saved by faith? Certainly he was! How did he demonstrate that faith? By his works. He built the ark according to God's specifications.

Noah serves as a shining example of how we are saved "By grace through faith." So it is today. Those who will go to heaven will be those who accept God's grace by humble obedience and submission.

It is by good works that I first accept God's saving grace and am saved, (1 Peter 3:21). Then, throughout my life, I strive to maintain good works, (Titus 3:8), so I can be part of His happy band, "a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

# Selfishness

Johnny Ramsey

The Jordan River feeds both the Dead Sea and the beautiful Sea of Galilee. The former one receives and keeps and dies. The latter one receives and gives and lives. This principle, translated into the land of the living determines whether our lives are fruitful or barren. We virtually save ourselves by serving mankind. The poorest man on earth is the one who has never been someone's good Samaritan! At the root of all sin is self. Think about it. Sin comes about when we dethrone the Lord and do as we please. From Eden to Eternity the chief cause of evil doing has been and shall be selfishness. Envy, jealousy, greed, murder and sensuality proceed from the ego-cenytic personity. The exaltation of self hinders the sweet influence of Christ's presence in our lives. We can ill-afford such an expensive sin. We often try to disguise this ugly attitude. Usually, as in the story that follows, we are unsuccessful. A little boy was pulling a wagon while his playmate was trying to climb out of it as she was evidently afraid. The mother asked: "What are you trying to do?" The boy replied: "I'm trying to make Janie happy."

"But can't you see she doesn't like riding?"

"Yes, replied the lad, but I want to make her happy doing the things I like to do." Wonder where the small boy learned that kind or reasoning? Let us notice from the Bible some examples of selfishness. Perhaps, this brief

study will give us occasion to see ourselves reflected in the life of another. I'm confident that each of us needs a lesson on this basic problem.

Examples Of Selfishness

1. Cain, Genesis 4: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

2. Ahab and Naboth's Vineyard: I Kings 21.

3. David's selfishness which caused adultery and murder: II Samuel 11.

4. The elder brother in Luke 15 is the epitome of self-interest.

5. James and John selfishly wanted a place of honor; Matthew 20.

These folk, along with the Jews who crucified the Lord of Glory, allowed Satan to convince them that they were very important. This is a necessary step on the road to selfishness.

Examples Of Unselfishness

1. Joseph, who returned good for evil unto his brethren.

2. Abraham, who graciously gave Lot first choice of the land.

3. The Good Samaritan, who unlike the outwardly pious, took time to help a fellow sojourner.

4. Barnabas, who sold his land and gave all the proceeds unto the needy.

5. Paul, who generously gave himself to the service of Christ.

These five, in the Spirit of the Lord, leave challenging examples for us. Following the selfless pattern of our Lord will enrich anyone's life. Christianity shall always be a religion of service.

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# Determining The Role Of Women

**Tom Keener**

The story is told that the Apostle Paul landed at a seaport on one of his missionary journeys. He was met by a crowd of angry women. Each woman was holding a placard. One read, "Paul is an old bachelor that hates women." Another stated, "Paul is a male chauvinist pig" and a third charged, "Paul is unfair." Paul looked the crowd over and said, "Well ladies, I see you got my letter." While such a confrontation didn't occur in the first century, Paul's letters are certainly under attack today.

Most of the New Testament instructions concerning women were authored by Paul. Those who disagree

with Paul's instructions on the role of women try to discredit or limit his writings. Some deny Pauline authorship of the passages involved; others accept Pauline authorship, but view the instructions as Paul's own thinking rather than the word of God. Others accept the inspiration of the Bible and Paul's authorship, but limit the application of Paul's instruction to the immediate situation. The evidence is strong, however, that Paul was the author of the letters bearing his name and that he wrote by inspiration. While the letters were addressed to a specific situation, there is a message and application to Christians in every age and culture.

At the close of the twentieth

century the role of women in the church is a controversial topic. Feminist ideology has made inroads into the church. Attitudes and practices concerning the role of women are more diverse than a few years ago. The subject is

frequently discussed in lectures, sermons, and articles. In a lecture at one of our universities, the speaker stated that to avoid division the church must determine the real issues concerning the role of women in the church. To

avoid division and please God on this matter and all others we must believe, respect, and obey God's word. May it ever be our final standard in determining right from wrong.

--Rosebud, Texas.

## We Must Keep The Heart Pure

**G. F. Raines**

Every person should become thoroughly familiar with the teaching of the Bible concerning the spiritual heart.

The spiritual heart is the spirit (Romans 2:28, 29) and "shall live forever" (Psalm 22:26).

In the matchless Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

The spiritual heart is the fountain from which all our actions flow. Solomon says: "Keep thy heart with all

diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). In another passage Solomon says that a man is "as he thinketh in his heart" (Proverbs 23:7).

When the fountain from which literal water flows is kept clean, the stream will be pure, but if filth accumulates in the fountain the stream thereby becomes defiled. Analogously, if we keep our heart clean, our life will be pure; but if we allow moral filth to accumulate in our heart, our manner of life will be likewise contaminated:

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19).

The apostle Paul says: "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, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

## Obedience Of Faith

**Bobby Key**

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever." The statement that you have just read was penned by the inspired apostle Paul, and may be found in the last three verses of the Roman letter.

The gospel was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. The same gospel preached today to earnest, sincere, and honest souls causes the same obedience of faith. In the early days of the church, "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Out of the hundreds of faiths found in the world, there is only one true faith. "Beloved,

when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The faith described in this passage is from God and absolutely free from contamination created by the theories of men.

Salvation comes through obedience of faith, not by faith only. "Christ became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). Those who refuse to obey the gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). To obey the gospel is to be obedient to the faith. When "the faith" is used in the New Testament, it often refers to that body of truth, delivered by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets. This truth must be believed and obeyed in order to obtain eternal life.

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

## "The Judgment?"

**Mike Benson**

Dear Mike,

"What exactly does the Bible have to say about the judgment?"

You pose a sobering question. The judgment will be an occasion for great rejoicing or despondent tears, depending upon our relationship to the Lord.

The Bible furnishes us with all that we need to know about this matter. Examine the following carefully:

1. Judgment is certain. Make no mistake about it, each of us will be judged! Rich or poor, young or old, educated or uneducated . . . we will all make our appearance at the judgment. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10). "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews

9:27). "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10-12). See also

II Peter 2:9; 3:7.

2. Christ will reside as judge. We can take great comfort in the fact that Jesus will be the Judge. Paul said, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**There's an old fable about an elephant and a flea that I want you to ponder today. The two were great friends, and often walked and chatted together. One day they were walking along a back country road when they came to a flimsy wood bridge that spanned a deep gorge. They walked across, side by side, the little bridge swaying and creaking under the weight of the elephant. When they were across, the flea asked his big friend, "Did you notice how WE shook that bridge!"**

**Now, here's the application: Sometimes folks walk through their lives treating God like that. They breathe His air, eat His food, drink His rain, and then walk through their days like they owe Him nothing. In reality, we owe Him everything. The only reasonable response to His goodness is faithful service. Like the Psalmist said, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits" (Psalm 68:19).**

## Marvelous Mondays At McDonalds

**Keith Parker**

I call them "Marvelous Mondays at McDonalds." Every Monday morning from 8:00 until 9:00, Ashley has my undivided attention. No newspaper. No phone calls. No interruptions. Just one-on-one daddy-daughter time. A time to listen, talk, pray, and eat an Egg McMuffin.

I've seen too many preachers (and others) neglect their children. There is a good deed

to be done here and there. Somebody needs to talk. Somebody needs to be prayed for. Another needs to be visited. There is no harm intended. And, yes, it's so easy to become involved in the lives of others . . . doing good . . . and overlook those that you love most. Our children are left on the outside looking in.

Last night (I'm writing on Tuesday morning), I did what most Americans do . . .

watched a few minutes of Monday Night Football. I heard the voice of Frank Gifford, former player and now announcer for ABC. Mr. Gifford has spent much of his life traveling the country to broadcast football games. Recently he frankly (no pun intended) admitted, "My kids grew up and, in all honesty, I hardly knew them. It's one of the great regrets I have. My

son Kyle used to walk around the back of the TV set to see how I got in there. Now he's 35."

Listen to God's answer. *"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the*

*road, when you lie down and when you get up"* (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7). Know what God is saying? Spend time with those you love the most . . . and when you do, teach them about the One who loves you the most.

Time marches on. Children grow up. Before they do, take them to McDonalds.

## "The Judgment?"

Continued From Page 3

## Ten Ways To Improve The Church

**Joe R. Barnett**

1. Tell yourself over and over that since you are not perfect, you would not fit into a perfect congregation.

2. Instead of picking out the worldly members to point to, pick out the sincere, dedicated, spiritual members and thank God for them. You will find what you seek.

3. If you are old, treat the young with the consideration you desired as a young person. If you are young, treat adults with the respect you will want when you mature.

4. When you are tempted to

criticize others, be sure to pray earnestly for them first. This may not totally change them, but it will do wonders for your attitude.

5. When you see a work being neglected, instead of being critical, offer to help.

6. Never, never blame others for your own failures. Every individual can be fruitful in spite of the bad examples and discouraging attitudes of others, if he is determined to be.

7. Remind yourself every day that the only way you can improve the world or the

church is to begin with yourself.

8. Consciously look for the good qualities in every brother and sister in Christ. When you think of a brother or sister, make a quick mental note of the good points each possesses.

9. Constantly strive to increase your circle of associates in the church. Try to do something good for each.

10. Every church has problems. Constantly ask yourself, "Am I part of the problem or part of the solution?"

everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained . . ." (Acts 17:30, 31). "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom" (II Timothy 4:1). "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (II Timothy 4:8).

There are times when it is difficult for us to know if an accused man is guilty or innocent. The evidence may

appear inconclusive, thus our final decision is subject to error. But the Lord's judgment will be infallible. His verdict will be fair, impartial, and just.

3. His Word will serve as the standard for our judgment. Our every thought, word, and deed will be weighed in the balance. Christ said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). "In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16).

--Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## Selfishness

Continued From Page 2

surrender, and sacrifice. The one great question in the judgment shall be, for all practical purposes: "Did you win the battle over self?" A song writer furnishes us with a fitting close:

"Higher than the highest heavens,

Deeper than the deepest sea, Lord, Thy love at last has conquered

None of self, and all of Thee."

That this sentiment may increase in our lives is our prayer.

## Where Would Jesus Place Membership?

Continued From Page 1

book of life. Though each will be judged individually, the local church one attends will largely determine whether or not he goes to heaven.

Let us make the church what

Christ expects. Then when someone visits and desires to work with us, no apology need be made. For if it is good enough for the Lord, it is good enough for His servants!

### Words Of Truth

### Lectureship

### September 30

### Through October 2

### 6th Ave.

### Church Of Christ

### Jasper, Alabama

June 10, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- "Obey Them Which Have The Rule Over You"
- The Knowledge Of God
- The Curse Of Gambling
- The Church Of Christ
- "Most Of A Minute"

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# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of truth and soberness." -- Acts 26:24

## The Church

**Bobby Key**

The church has no creed but Christ. The Bible is all-sufficient and the infallible guide from earth to heaven. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my pathway" (Psalm 119:105). It is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in the way of righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16, 17). We need no other book. Human creeds foster division. We must go back to

the Bible in all that we believe, teach, and practice.

The church has no name but Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). We glorify God in this name. We pray in His name, and the disciples were called Christians after His name. All we do in word or deed is done in His name (Colossians 3:17; Acts 11:26). We honor Christ by wearing His name. Human names are always divisive

and antagonistic to the spirit of Christ. No name can compare with the name of Christ (Philippians 2:9).

The church has no builder, head, or foundation other than Christ. Christ built His church (Matthew 16:18). He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25). Christ is the head of the church, which is His body (Colossians 1:18). He is the foundation of His church (I Corinthians 3:11). He is the saviour of the church (Ephesians 5:23). The church

is the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

The church respects Christ and follows His teaching in its worship. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In order for worship to be acceptable to God, it must be from the heart, sincere, and guided by the word of God, which is truth (John 17:17). To ignore His teaching and follow our own devices, means that our worship is unacceptable. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching

the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:19). Any item of worship not directed to God as its object misses the mark. God did not leave His people without a pattern in this important matter.

One cannot love Christ without loving the church. One cannot be in Christ, without being in the church. Christ and the church are inseparable.

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

## Do You Have A Price?

**Jim Gillaspie**

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). Paul was talking about the price that Jesus paid on the cross, but this past week I read about some others who had been bought with a price.

Tuesday's newspaper carried an article about a denominational church in Maryland that offered a ten dollar bill to anyone who would come and sit through their seventy-five minute church service. The service

included a short skit and singing that was backed by a light-rock band. The article went on to say that their attendance that day was 125 more than usual. At first reading, I could hardly believe it. Someone has said that we live in a time when people are tuned into radio WIIFM ("What's In It For Me), and perhaps this is just another indication of that type of attitude. But then the more I thought about it, the more I began to wonder... (1) What if they had offered \$100 instead of \$10? How many would have shown up for

"worship" then? (2) What if members of the church were offered a certain amount of money for every worship service they attended? Would our attendance improve? (3) What if every time we missed worship, we missed out on a fifty or hundred dollar bill? Would the times we miss for sickness, company, or fatigue diminish? Would we still be "provisionally hindered" as often?

Christianity began as a result of sacrifice (John 15:13). The Son of God willingly gave His life to pay the awful price for sin. Peter

said "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24). Paul said "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." When Jesus spoke to those who would follow Him, he said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

The Christian life is a life

of sacrifice and service. Our worship is an outward pouring of praise and appreciation for a God who loved us enough to take our place on the tree. If we find that we are more motivated to worship by what we can receive, then the emphasis is in the wrong place! The next time you miss a worship service, ask yourself if you could have been present if a \$100 bill had been offered for your attendance. If the answer is yes, then it's time to take another look at Calvary!

--419 Parkman Dr., Manchester, GA 31816.

## "Global Flood?"

**Mike Benson**

Dear Mr. Benson,  
"Was the flood of Noah's day global or was it just a

local, Mesopotamian flood?"  
Your question is one which many people ask. Please note the following:

1. There would have been no need for Noah to build an ark if the flood was confined to a limited area of the earth.

In his book, "The World That Perished" professor John C. Whitcomb writes:

"The whole procedure of

constructing such a vessel, involving over one hundred years of planning and toiling,

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## "Obey Them Which Have The Rule Over You"

Glenn Colley

There is an ongoing debate these days about the authority of the group of men holding the office of elder (or bishop) in the church. Some believe that the elders have no authority, and that their leadership applies only in the sense of maintaining a good example, and no more. Others believe that elders have authority to make judgments relative to the spiritual wellbeing of the members in the flock they oversee, and that the members have an obligation to follow their leadership unless it conflicts with God's word.

There are several interesting passages awaiting your consideration on this subject: I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:1-4.

We would also do well to consider Hebrews 13:17 which reads, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable to you." Anyone can see from this verse that we are commanded to obey SOMEONE. If this passage teaches obedience to the elders of the church, then in honest hearts the

confusion over the authority of elders will be forever settled.

The word "Obey" here is from the Greek word *Peitho*. According to Thayer it comes from a root word meaning "To bind." Specifically in this passage it means, "To listen to, obey, yield to, comply with" (Thayer, 1977, pg. 497).

But who are we to obey according to this passage? Who is it who has the "rule over you," and watches "for your souls?" We find two other references in this chapter to the ones who have the rule over us: (vs. 7) -- "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (vs. 24). -- "Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints..."

In Acts 20:28, where Paul is instructing the elders of the church from Ephesus, we read, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." The elders can be correctly described as "overseers," from a Greek word meaning "A man charged with the duty of

seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly." That describes elders in the New Testament church.

While it is true that elders lead by example, (I Peter 5:3), it is also true that elders lead as overseers, and we, as members of the flock which they are among, must obey them. The exception to this teaching would of course be the case of elders requiring that which contradicts the word of God (Acts 5:29). -- "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Hebrews 13:17 clearly has reference to the overseers of the flock, the elders of the church.

We should thank God for godly elders. May we be humble Christians who "remember them which have the rule" over us (Hebrews 13:7). May we obey them, and submit ourselves (vs. 17). Their responsibility is to "watch for" our souls (vs. 17). One day, after the trumpet sounds it's unmistakable blast, those elders will give account for the way they have overseen and cared for the flock which Christ, the Chief Shepherd, left in their care (I Peter 5:4). May we hold up their hands so they may do their work "with joy, and not with grief."

## The Knowledge Of God

Neal Pollard

An incontrovertible statement is asserted powerfully in each of the Bible's sixty-six books. Though there arises a popular element in each generation attempting to limit what we can know spiritually, the honest heart cannot help but see the pervading proof of God and His ability to reign over and judge all mankind. The knowledge of God is blessed assurance for the believer, but is surely baneful information to the skeptic. Yes, "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). And, oh yes, all should speak with Job and say, "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). Without doubt, we know that God's judgments "are right" (Psalm 119:75). Throughout the biography of the gospels and testimonies of the epistolary writings we are made to "know the love of Christ..." (Ephesians 3:19). John supplies this confidence, that "ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I John 5:13). We know that we shall be judged by the Word of God (John 12:48-50). We know that we have been given everything pertaining to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3), that we have been redeemed by the incorruptible Christ (I Peter 1:18-19), and a thousand other certainties upheld in the scriptures.

We also know that "the Lord He is God." Knowing that God ever was, is, and ever will be helps us see the

divine permanence of Jehovah. People come and go, countries rise and fall, customs form then disintegrate, but God is. The knowledge of God is a wonderful fact underlined by each of the Bible's inspired books. Notice:

1. (Genesis 24:12-14) God's KINDNESS is knowable.

2. (Exodus 14:4-18) God's MATCHLESS HONOR is knowable.

3. (Leviticus 23:43) God's PROTECTING NATURE is knowable.

4. (Numbers 16:28) God's SPOKESMEN are knowable.

5. (Deuteronomy 4:35) God's PREEMINENCE is knowable.

6. (Joshua 23:13) God's CONDITIONS are knowable.

7. (Judges 6:37) God's INTERVENTION is knowable.

8. (Ruth 2:12) God's REWARD is knowable.

9. (I Samuel 17:46-47) God's MEANS OF SALVATION is knowable.

10. (II Samuel 7:18-29) God's PROMISES are knowable.

11. (I Kings 20:28) God's SUPREMACY is knowable.

12. (II Kings 19:19) God's UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY is knowable.

13. (I Chronicles 28:9) God's DIVINE QUALITIES are knowable.

14. (II Chronicles 25:16) God's DISAPPROVAL is knowable.

Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# The Curse Of Gambling

W. A. Holley

The word gambling is not used in the Bible, but there are many verses of Scripture that condemn it. All things evil need not be mentioned in the Sacred Text for them to be sinful. For example, crack cocaine, marijuana, tobacco, heroin and the like are never mentioned in the Bible, but all sober-minded people know that the habitual use of these drugs is very detrimental to their user's health. We shall note . . .

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). "Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17, ASV). "For we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (II Corinthians 8:21, ASV). "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12, ASV). Throughout the ages God has always commanded men to work for their necessities (Genesis 2:15-17; II Thessalonians 3:3-12). By whatever means it is always sinful to cheat others out of their possessions.

Most people want something for nothing which is impossible, for God's law of sowing and reaping cannot be repealed (Galatians 6:7-8;

Job 13:9). Gambling is growing in popularity. Last year, for the first time, more people visited the casinos than attend the Major League ballparks -- some 92 million trips, one authority says.

Gladly, we say that the Southern States are known as the Bible Belt, but, if things continue, this region will be known as the Blackjack Belt. Legalized gambling already exists in Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and there are plans for more. There is now a major move to legalize casino gambling here in the state of Alabama.

Christians need to contact the Governor and the legislative representatives and express their opposition to such proposals. We should not permit the gambling interests to take over our state without a fight.

The gambling promoters argue that casinos and the like will solve financial crisis with regard to education, but it will not. One authority says, "Casinos suck money out of the local economy," away from existing movie theaters, car dealerships, clothing shops and sports arenas. For example, in Atlantic City, about 100 of 250 restaurants have closed since the casinos debuted there in 1978. Money can be spent only once; when it is spent on gambling it cannot be spent to buy clothes and food and medical supplies for poor children.

When we consider lottery, casino, sports wagering, dog and horse racing, we can see that gambling takes a terrible toll on the American economy -- In 1992 they wagered \$330 billion. Gambling has many hidden costs. Crime, prostitution, drunkenness, etc., destroys the moral fiber of our nation.

It is possible for men and women to become addicted to gambling. One man in his 70s ran up \$150,000 debt by buying lottery tickets. Some authorities say that 5% of the gamblers have serious emotional problems. The gambling interests apply every psychological trick known to those who visit their establishment to cause them to forget about reality and to live in the dream-world of getting something for nothing: Alcohol, beautiful women, and various colors which seem to trigger a favorable response in leading gamblers to continue their stay in the gambling establishment. One promoter said, "Whiskey is the greatest gambling tonic in the world."

Gambling is a losing proposition. While there are a few winners, there are thousands of losers. Those who gamble lose materially, morally, and spiritually. Greediness, covetousness, and fraud are always sinful. Gambling breeds all kinds of crime: prostitution, drugs, murders, gangs, et al.

Many argue that gambling

is a mere game; yes, and it's a crooked game. Most gambling games are set to give the house a certain percentage of advantage. For example, "A craps player who wagered just \$1 every bet for two months straight would have only one chance in 2 trillion to win \$1,000 before he lost \$1,000."

Gambling is becoming more and more acceptable. Even churches are becoming involved in gambling through bingo. This author knew a woman who lost her husband's paycheck each week that came, thus causing them to die in poverty.

Gambling sympathizers try to justify gambling with those verses of Scripture that mention "casting lots." But it is a misuse to so interpret them. Yes, there were those who cast lots, but it was the Lord God who made the decision. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah" (Proverbs 16:33, ASV). For example, when the apostles wished to select another to take Judas' place, they prayed and asked the Lord to make the decision of which man would be so honored (Acts 1:24-26). Thus casting lots was a means of deciding an issue or of determining the divine will in a matter.

Some say that life is a gamble. It is true that we are subjected to many risks or chances, but these cannot be

properly defined as gambling. Not all risks are gambling. Man should work for a living, instead of resorting to some scheme or trick that he may get something for nothing." An honest day's work for an honest day's pay" is a good motto (Philippians 4:8; II Thessalonians 3:6-12; I Thessalonians 2:9). May the Lord save us all from sinful "Satan's devices."

In summary, we humbly suggest that gambling is sinful because it often becomes addictive to those who engage in it. Gambling destroys the families of those who become hooked on it, taking away the very necessities of life -- food, clothing, medical attention, and a place to live. Thus, it victimizes those innocent people who must suffer because of the greed of others.

Rather than trusting in chance, we should trust in the will of God (Matthew 6:19-34, ASV). It is impossible to love the world and God at the same time (I John 2:14-17).

Gambling violates the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). One cannot follow the Golden Rule when one uses money that ought to be used for food, clothes, medicine, education, on slot-machines and other gambling paraphernalia.

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

## The Church Of Christ

Stephen Wiggins

The New Testament church is not a building where Christians assemble each Sunday for worship. Rather the church is saved people who have obeyed the gospel. In the book of Acts when Saul persecuted the church, he persecuted men and women (Acts 8:1-3). Thus, it is Christian men and women who make up the church.

In the second chapter of Acts the church is mentioned

for the first time as being in existence (Acts 2:47). On this occasion the apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, preached that salvation from sins could now be had through the resurrected Jesus Christ. When the people were convinced of their sins they inquired of the apostles regarding what they must do to be saved. The apostle Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye

shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Those who then obeyed the gospel by repenting and being baptized were then added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:41-47).

The church to which these first century Christians were added to was the church Jesus had promised to build and had died for (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). These Christians did not "join" the church of their choice. There is no such

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**Ownership is crucial to a society like ours. We hold deeds to houses, titles to cars and receipts for purchases at the furniture store. So, did you ever think about who owns us? If your answer is "we own ourselves," you might want to listen to God's word on the subject.**

**In Genesis 2 God created Eve from a rib taken from Adam. He then described her as "the mother of all living." Psalm 100 says, "Know ye that the Lord, he is God. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people." Paul says in I Corinthians 6:20, "For ye are bought with a price, therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."**

**Creation is the ultimate exercise of power. Only God has it. And when creation takes place, only the Creator possesses the deed of ownership.**

## "Global Flood?"

Continued From Page 1  
 simply to escape a local flood, can hardly be ascribed as anything but utterly foolish and unnecessary. How much more sensible it would have been for God simply to have warned Noah of the coming destruction in plenty of time for him to move to an area that would not have been affected by the Flood, even as Lot was taken out of Sodom before the fire fell from heaven. Not only so, but also the great numbers of animals

of all kinds, and certainly birds, could easily have moved out of the danger zone also, without having to be stored in a barge for an entire year. The Biblical record simply cannot be harmonized with the concept of a flood that was confined to the Near East."

2. Noah and his family were the ONLY people to escape the flood. Genesis states, "And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every

creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive" (Genesis 7:21-23). Peter wrote, "who formerly were disobedient,

when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water" (I Peter 3:20). See also II Peter 2:5.

3. God's promise to never again send such a flood (Genesis 8:21; 9:11, 15) has been broken on numerous occasions if it was only a local flood. Three times God promised never again to destroy the earth by a flood. He, intum, put a rainbow in

the sky as a sign of that promise covenant (Genesis 9:13-17). If the flood of the Bible was only a local flood, then God has broken His promise and is therefore a liar, since there have been countless local floods on the earth which have taken the lives of thousands of people. Students of the Bible must reject this idea based on the grounds that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## The Knowledge Of God

Continued From Page 2

15. (Ezra 7:25) God's LAWS are knowable.

16. (Nehemiah 9:14) God's REVELATION is knowable.

17. (Esther 4:14 + Rest of Book) God's PROVIDENCE is knowable.

18. (Job 19:25) God's REDEMPTIVE WORK is knowable.

19. (Psalm 100:3) God's CREATIVE POWER is knowable.

20. (Proverbs 24:12) God's LIMITLESS ABILITY is knowable.

21. (Ecclesiastes 3:14) God's PERFECTION is knowable.

22. (Song of Solomon) God's UNDYING, DEVOTED LOVE is knowable.

23. (Isaiah 60:16) God's SALVATION AND REDEMPTION are knowable.

24. (Jeremiah 16:21) God's NAME AND MIGHT are knowable.

25. (Lamentations) God's STANDARD FOR PUNISHMENT is knowable.

26. (Ezekiel 5:13) God's ZEALOUS WORD is knowable.

27. (Daniel 11:32) God's STRENGTHENING is knowable.

28. (Hosea 13:4) God's WORSHIP REQUIREMENTS are knowable.

29. (Joel 2:27) God's PRESENCE is knowable.

30. (Amos 3:2) God's HATRED TOWARD INIQUITY is knowable.

31. (Obadiah) God's FEELING TOWARD THE PROUD is knowable.

32. (Jonah 4:2) God's GRACIOUSNESS is knowable.

33. (Micah 6:5) God's RIGHTEOUSNESS is knowable.

34. (Nahum 1) God's PROTECTIVE CARE is knowable.

35. (Habakkuk 2:14) God's GLORY is knowable.

36. (Zephaniah 2:3) God's DESIRE TO BE SOUGHT is knowable.

37. (Haggai) God's MISSION is knowable.

38. (Zechariah 2:9-13) God's PLAN OF SALVATION is knowable.

39. (Malachi 2:4-5) God's COVENANT is knowable.

40. (Matthew 22:16) God's TEACHINGS are knowable.

41. (Mark 1:24) God's HOLINESS is knowable.

42. (Luke 11:13) God's BENEVOLENCE is knowable.

43. (John 17:3) God's UNIQUENESS is knowable.

44. (Acts 2:36-47) God's REQUIREMENTS FOR SALVATION are knowable.

45. (Romans 8:28) God's ASSURANCE TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM is knowable.

46. (I Corinthians 2:12) God's SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS are knowable.

47. (II Corinthians 8:9) God's GRACE is knowable.

48. (Galatians 3:7) God's HEIRS are knowable.

49. (Ephesians 1:17-19) God's BESTOWED WISDOM AND HOPE are knowable.

50. (Philippians 3:8-11) God's SON is knowable.

51. (Colossians 4:1) God's MASTERFUL ROLE is knowable.

52. (I Thessalonians 1:4) God's MEANS OF ELECTION is knowable.

53. (II Thessalonians 3:7) God's GOOD EXAMPLES are knowable.

54. (I Timothy 3:15) God's CODE OF CONDUCT IN THE KINGDOM is knowable.

55. (II Timothy 3:15-17) God's HOLY SCRIPTURES are knowable.

56. (Titus 1:9-16) God's SOUND DOCTRINE is knowable.

57. (Philemon) God's FREEDOM FROM SIN AND CALL FOR SERVICE IN CHRIST are knowable.

58. (Hebrews 8:11-13) God's SUPERIOR SALVATION is knowable.

59. (James 2:20) God's DEMAND FOR ACTIVE FAITH is knowable.

60. (I Peter 1:18-19) God's INCORRUPTIBLE MEANS OF SALVATION is knowable.

61. (II Peter 3:17) God's FOREWARNINGS are knowable.

62. (I John 4:2) God's SPIRIT is knowable.

63. (II John 1) God's TRUTH is knowable.

64. (III John 12) God's INSPIRED WRITERS' TRUTHFUL RECORD is knowable.

65. (Jude 4-23) God's ENEMIES are knowable.

66. (Revelation 2:10, 17) God's REWARD is knowable.

This does not begin to exhaust the list of things which the Bible tells us we can know! God has not left us to grope in the dark.

## The Church Of Christ

Continued From Page 3  
 thing in the Bible as joining the church of your choice. This is a ridiculous man-made doctrine invented and perpetuated by those who have a denominational concept of the New Testament church. There were not denominations in New Testament times. There was only the church which

Jesus established and to which He added people as they obeyed the gospel.

Today, when a person obeys the truth, the Lord adds him or her to the church of Christ just as was done in the New Testament. When one obeys Baptist doctrine, that person becomes a member of the Baptist church. When one obeys Methodist doctrine,

that person becomes a member of the Methodist church. When one obeys Pentecostal doctrine, that person becomes a member of the Pentecostal church. The list could go on and on. But obedience to the gospel, taught as the apostles taught it and obeyed as the people in the first century obeyed it, makes Christians only and the

only Christians. When one obeys Bible truth, then the Lord adds that person, not to a denomination, but to the church which Jesus owns.

Are you familiar with the church of Christ? We desire to be simply New Testament Christians following only the New Testament pattern. We have no creeds, no catechisms, no disciplines,

and no man made doctrines. We want only to practice New Testament Christianity as the New Testament church. What can be wrong with this?

June 17, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Should Our Preachers  
Take Stands  
In Political Issues?
- Disregard For Truth
- Learn To Discern
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Spiritual Growth  
For Our Souls

Volume 30 Number 25  
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# The Words C Truth

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

## What Do Christians Do?

Neal Pollard

The Bible clearly reveals who Christians are. They are "born again" (John 3:3-7), "redeemed" (Revelation 5:9), "forgiven" (Ephesians 1:7), "reconciled" (Romans 5:8-10; Colossians 1:21), "washed" (Revelation 1:5), and "justified" (I Corinthians 6:11) "children of God" (Galatians 3:26-27). Christians are followers or adherents of Christ, per scriptures such as Acts 11:26 and I Peter 4:16 (VINES' NOTES, 191). Christianity is a state of being, but it is much more than that.

The Christian is a "doer." Inactive Christians will never make it through the holy gates of heaven, as the Laodicean brethren learned (cf. Revelation 3:16-19). What do Christians do?

**CHRISTIANS ATTAIN.** There are things to be gained and accomplished. Teddy Roosevelt said, "Do what you can with what you have where you are." The Christian adopts such a philosophy about daily Christian living. "A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:5). Paul admonished Timothy to be a good minister through the teaching of Christ's doctrine to his brethren. By so doing, Timothy showed himself to be "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto he

had attained (I Timothy 4:6). Paul himself had a goal which he sought to accomplish. He wrote to his Philippian brethren, that all his earthly achievements he counted but loss for Christ (Philippians 3:8). He further stated that he endured all hardships "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (3:10-11). Like Paul, we must press on, so that we can lay hold on the eternal prize Christ has promised all faithful Christians (3:12-16).

**CHRISTIANS ABSTAIN.** Christians are behooved to do without some things in order to please God. To abide in God's will, the Christian will "abstain from fornication" (I Thessalonians 4:3). More than that, the Christian will endeavor to "abstain from every form of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). As Peter put it, Christians, as pilgrims and strangers in this land, should "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The "abstain scriptures" prohibit fornication, every form of evil, and fleshly lusts. Surely, Christians will never be found engaged in and defending practices which fall into those three

categories!

**CHRISTIANS ENTERTAIN.** Christians who please God entertain only good and wholesome thoughts (cf. Philippians 4:8). They will not want to fill their hearts with defiling thoughts (Matthew 15:19-20). Christians also seek to "entertain [show love unto, ASV] strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2).

**CHRISTIANS GAIN.** The mission of the Christian is to gain brethren. With evangelism, we are trying to gain souls for Christ and His glory (cf. I Corinthians 9:19-22). We are to try and gain our erring brethren (Matthew 18:15-17; James 5:19-20).

The gain concept revealed in the Bible also relates on the personal level. Paul saw his life this way: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). We try to pattern ourselves after Christ and His word so that we can gain the victory.

**CHRISTIANS MAINTAIN.** Christians are to "maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). Christians maintain these good works "to meet urgent needs" and to be fruitful (Titus 3:14). These good works could include meeting the qualifications of pure religion, such as ministering to widows and orphans (James 1:27). These good works may include the

bearing of others' burdens (Galatians 6:2). These good works may require going a second mile (Matthew 5:41). All of us should desire to work in the "maintenance department."

**CHRISTIANS OBTAIN.** Obtain literally means "to get possession of by effort." Such a work ethic helped to develop the greatness of our nation. Spiritually, he achieves greatness who possesses spiritual blessings through intense and sustained effort. Those who cultivate the ability to be merciful "shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Perseverance pays off in the obtainment of the incorruptible crown (I Corinthians 9:24-26). Through faithful obedience, the Christian obtains salvation by Christ (I Thessalonians 5:9). By whipping the enemies of covetousness and lust, we obtain life's blessings (cf. James 4:2-4).

**CHRISTIANS REMAIN.** Those Christians who remain faithful to God will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Though it is possible for a child of God to so sin as to be eternally lost (II Peter 2:20-22; Hebrews 6:4-6), God wants Christians to live in spiritual fidelity. John wrote, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and

And this is the at he hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2:24b-25).

**CHRISTIANS RETAIN.** They who overcome iniquitous hearts retain God in their knowledge, and such a message is conveyed by Paul in his inspired discourse with the Roman church (Romans 1:18-32, esp. 28). David taught his son, Solomon, to retain a father's words and commandments in order to live (Proverbs 4:4). We have a Father whose spoken word will one day judge us. It will determine whether we have eternal life or eternal death (John 12:48).

A Christian must be characterized by "action verbs." Being content to just "be" a Christian and being satisfied in a state of comfort devoid of active faith is a mediocre, "linking verb religion." Let us aspire to "do" for the Lord "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do . . ." with all our might (Ecclesiastes 9:10)!

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# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Words Of Truth

### Lectureship

September 30 - October 2  
6th Ave. Church Of Christ  
Jasper, AL

## Should Our Preachers Take Stands In Political Issues?

Glenn Colley

"Politics," according to Webster and his primary definition, simply means, "Of, or having to do with, government."

It is generally proper to adhere to the old statement "Preachers should avoid politics," but it should not be considered a blanket policy for a preacher of righteousness. When the issue at hand pertains to the economy, foreign trade, length of offices, etc., preachers who are outspoken may risk losing their influence with people who have different opinions, and who will view the preacher as one who doesn't clarify the difference between a matter of opinion and a matter of Christian responsibility.

On the other hand, when politics enter the arena of moral principles, Christians and their preachers should use their voices for righteousness. Because this is America, moral issues, brought to public forum, are simply invitations for citizens to speak their positions. How can it be right for Christians to remain silent while the forces of evil wax bolder and bolder?

Preachers should stand

for truth and morality whether politics are involved or not. The fact that politicians pull morals onto their turf does not relieve the preacher of his responsibility to stand tall.

***The fact that politicians pull morals onto their turf does not relieve the preacher of his responsibility to stand tall.***

There are at least seven reasons why God's preachers should take stands to encourage moral votes:

1. *Because preachers need to be a pattern of good works.* Paul wrote to Titus in Titus 2:7, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity . . ."

What a contrast Paul makes in this instruction to Titus, and what Jesus observed in the Pharisees. "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their

fingers" (Matthew 23:4).

Preachers are to take the lead in good works.

2. *Because taking a stand demonstrates to others our abhorrence for evil.*

Romans 12:9 says, "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." This principle certainly applies whether there is an upcoming vote or not. We do not fellowship the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, (Ephesians 5:11).

3. *Because taking a stand shows that you believe and teach that we should abstain from the appearance of evil.*

This teaching is forever fixed in Paul's writing, I Thessalonians 5:17. Abhorring evil and abstaining from the appearance of evil comes into play when we "Let our light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify the Father which is in heaven, (Matthew 5:16). When we use our voices for morality, people in our communities will know something important about our hearts.

4. *Because taking a stand shows that you don't fear the forces of evil. You don't cover.*

". . . greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

Many a cowardly man has safely hidden his convictions behind a screen of excuses: "I don't think a man should be public about his convictions when politics are involved," or, "Some people in the church here are on the other side of this issue. If I speak out, I might make them unhappy."

Remember that Revelation 21:8 says, "But the fearful . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone . . ." How much truth would I have to hold back from teaching before I would fall into the category of "fearful?"

5. *Because taking a stand shows that you are concerned about your fellow man, and not just about yourself.*

When issues of morality are thrust into the political arena, and the atmosphere in which my neighbors and their children will live is at stake, I must just stand in timid silence. Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them . . ." (Matthew 7:12). Some in

the community will perhaps have already suffered the consequences of the immorality being discussed, and will watch to see if you will take a stand for right.

6. *Because taking a stand shows that vocal stands for right are not just taken inside the church building behind closed doors.*

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him" (Acts 17:16, 17).

7. *Because taking a stand shows the world that there is conviction in Christianity.*

Christianity is not just for old women and children. It is for us all! Think of the great heroes of faith in the Bible and marvel at their conviction: Joshua, John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, and so many others.

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (I Corinthians 16:13).

## The Last Days

Mike Benson

"Are we living in the "last days?"

Yes. Carefully study the following:

1. The Old Testament prophets said "the mountain of the Lord's house" (i.e., the church) would be "established" (i.e., built) in the "last days." "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" (Isaiah 2:2). See also Micah 4:1.

2. The church Jesus promised (Matthew 16:18-19), was established on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord (Acts 2:47), thus, the "last days" (i.e., the Christian age) began in Acts 2, in

fulfillment of Jesus' promise. In fact, the apostle Peter told his audience that what was happening on that very occasion (in Acts 2), was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy which was to come to pass in the "last days" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16-17). Hence, the "last days began on Pentecost.

Continued On Page 4



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# Disregard For Truth

## Johnny Ramsey

Paul warned the Thessalonians that men would depart from the faith and that such apostasy was "already at work" in his day (II Thessalonians 2:7). When error comes it is not in one gigantic leap but in short steps that eventuate on the sordid streets of hell. The impact of the influence of such action overwhelms a lot of folk who go with the tide rather than choosing the challenging nature of Christianity. When the flood-gates of apostasy open wide great masses of spineless people are swept away. Such sorrow reminds me of the famous words of Cicero in the first century:

He departed, withdrew, rushed off and broke away."

It is very difficult to ever gain back those who unwisely and swiftly departed from Truth. When men fail to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21) it becomes axiomatic that someday soon they will no longer be among the saints. Those who never check the Scriptures to document the way of salvation are already in the trap of Satan (Acts 17:11). It is significant that the warning Paul gave the Ephesian elders concerning apostasy was quickly followed by a commendation of the sacred text as their only hope of saving the church (Acts 20:32). When brethren

no longer care what the Bible says, but are rather enthralled by public opinion and poise, they remind me of the man Catullus spoke of fifty years before Christ:

"Now he is treading that dark road to the place from which they say no one has ever returned."

A failure to stand up for the Lord (Ephesians 6:10-12) is tantamount to admitting the world is too much with us. When members of the church defect and abandon Christ for earthly fame they are bereft of solid foundation, secure moorings and future hope. Though it took Israel only one night to leave Egypt it took forty years to get Egypt out of them! When it was too much trouble to worship God properly (I Kings 12:28) and serving Him became tedious (Malachi 1:13) the tie that bound the creature to the Creator was flimsy indeed. One of Fanny Crosby's best hymns reads like this:

"Savior more than life to me

I am clinging, clinging close to Thee,

Every day, every hour

Let me feel Thy cleansing power

May Thy tender love to me

Bind me closer, closer Lord to Thee."

When we, like Ezra, seek the law of the Lord and do it we will naturally be stronger and more helpful to others who are on the verge of departure from the gospel

system. As there were false prophets in days gone by (II Peter 2:1) so shall false teachers abound in our day (I John 4:1). Such must be opposed by the sword of the Spirit, the blessed and powerful word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Those who would pervert the glad tidings must be exposed and never condoned (Galatians 1:6-9; II John 9-11). Regardless of the consequences "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29) and that must be done boldly (Acts 14:3).

Such courageous action will not make us morbid or tentative but rather aggressive with the opportunities the Savior supplies. We will never fall into Satan's trap of pessimism but realistically prepare for battle by more ardent study of Scripture, more fervent prayer and a dedication to duty that realizes the opposition is strong but that our God is far more able than all the henchmen the enemy can muster (I John 4:4; 5:4; 3:8). We dare not compromise, for Truth allows no truce (Matthew 12:30), and there can never be concord between light and darkness (II Corinthians 6:14). Smooth words of dialogue will never replace strong words of purity (Isaiah 30:10; Jeremiah 9:3). We have no proper choice but to say with Joshua:

"But as for me and my house we will serve Jehovah!" Truth will be more

precious than life and if death comes because we stood firm in the face of apostasy it will be a glorious and happy departure from this old sinful world (Revelation 14:13).

In the first century, followers of the Lamb of God, were persecuted, imprisoned and slaughtered by enemies of the gospel. Judaism, Gnosticism and Roman oppression combined to challenge Christianity. But, as many historians reflected, so the success of the Redeemer's army confirmed:

"The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the kingdom."

Apostasy again in our era is a shattering reality that demands the best within us if such error is defeated. Whether it be in a compromise in regard to worship, doctrine, morals (such as the marriage - divorce controversy) or authority, we dare not bend the knee to Baal. Too much is at stake -- now and in the future and even unto eternity - for us to acquiesce. In the pulpit, classroom, radio, television, periodicals, homes, streets and personal evangelism we must be true to the inspired and complete Holy Scriptures! In morals and modesty and every phase of personal purity we dare not hurt but rather uphold the cause of our Savior!

T. O. Chisholm tenderly wrote:

"Bring Christ your broken

life

So marred by sin

He will create anew

Make whole again

Your empty, wasted life

He will restore

And your iniquities

Remember no more."

May we never desert Bible principles or abandon the faith of the gospel but, with definite stamina, press on to higher ground (Philippians 3:14). We should beware of false prophets and remember "we are complete in Christ" (Colossians 2:8-10). Being always prepared to defend truth, (Philippians 1:17), let us rejoice in our relationship with the pristine beauty of Christianity (Romans 5:5). The courage and conviction of godly people, working in unison, under the banner of the Lord, can overwhelm evil and error. May we, therefore, work together in upholding the message of the Cross and in exposing sin wherever it is found.

"Give me some men who are stout-hearted men

Who will fight for the right they adore

Shoulder to shoulder and bolder and bolder

They grow as they go to the fore"

Truly, nothing can stop us or halt any plan when courageous Christians stick together man to man!

## Learn To Discern

### Allen Webster

If sin were an animal, it would be a snake. If it were a sickness, it would be cancer. If it were a chemical, it would be poison. In medical terms, it is a disease. In geographic terms, it is quicksand. In weather words, it is a hurricane. To the hunted, it is a trap; to the treasure-seeker, it is "fool's gold;" to the wagon train, it is an ambush; to life, it is death.

As bad as sin is, most

people are not afraid of it. They have learned to look at it through lens that deform its true character. Let us examine some of these.

DARK SUNSHADES -- "I can hardly see it at all." Ahab committed sin "as if it had been a light thing for him" (I Kings 16:31). Those who condemned Jesus said, "Let his blood be on us and our children" (Matthew 27:25). Some of the leading "thinkers" of our day are

denying the reality of sin. What used to be black is gray, and gray is white. As in Jeremiah's day, the "blushing mechanism" of some has malfunctioned (Jeremiah 8:12) -- nothing is sinful to them.

The spiritual senses of these have been dulled to the point that they cannot see, hear or feel with the inner faculties. Jesus looked into the hearts of those wearing sunshades

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I personally think that most of our youth problems in our country would clear up when we got our parent problems cleared up. For example, did you ever go to a little-league ball game and be shocked at the way the ADULTS acted when the game didn't go the way they wanted? Not long ago, 30 parents in Orange County, FL, were expelled from a little-league game for unsportsmanlike conduct after repeated oral abuse of opposing players.

Now here's the stinger: A parks director in Bloomingdale, IL, says parents are "trying to live egos through their children." What they don't realize, he says, is that they're beginning a never-ending circle. That's how their KIDS will act when they grow up. If he's right, wouldn't the flip side also be true? What if we showed our kids a Christian example and brought them to Sunday School and worship faithfully every week?

Ephesians 6 says, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

# Spiritual Growth For Our Souls

**Elwood Holt**

*Editor's Note: Brother Elwood Holt whose fine articles frequently appear in the Words Of Truth, and his good wife Lelia, have recently celebrated their 60th marriage anniversary. How did they do it? According to Brother Holt, "We loved each other from the beginning. Love can do a lot of wonderful things in one's life. We have put God and His Son first." Brother Holt's address is: P.O. Box 978, Grand Bay, Alabama 36541.*

Spiritual growth just doesn't happen automatically after one becomes a Christian. There are definite laws

governing spiritual growth as there are laws governing physical growth. To grow physically we must eat the proper foods, get adequate rest, exercise, and get fresh air. To grow spiritually we must follow God's laws governing spiritual growth. Let us look at two of them.

**COMMUNICATE GOD'S LOVE!** "And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" (Colossians 3:14).

Ask God to make you loving and kind at home, on the job, wherever you are! Start doing the things a loving person would do at home, at work, at play, and in all your relationships.

This is the most important duty of the Christian. As you see God loving others through you, even your enemies, you will be thrilled.

**SHARE JESUS WITH THE LOST!** And He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the creation" (Mark 16:15).

Lovingly, humbly, but firmly and proudly take your **STAND FOR CHRIST** right away. Let your family know, friends and work associates know you are a Christian.

Right away think of one person you want to win to Christ. Start praying for his conversion. Bring him to Church. Tell him why you

are a Christian, and what Christ has done for you.

**GO TO CHURCH REGULARLY!** Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, and not forsaking our own assembling together (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

Living the Christian life is not easy! We Christians live in a world that will actually try to hinder us from serving Jesus. The world will not only be cold, it will be hostile at times! We Christians need each other.

In the gathering of the Church we find spiritual help. The Church is simply a gathering of God's people. By meeting regularly with

other believers, we receive and give encouragement to live for Jesus. This is one of the main reasons why Christ made the Church -- to help us grow in our Christian lives. We cannot grow as we should unless we attend Church regularly.

You know what happens to Christians when they do not go to Church regularly with other Christians? They lose their spiritual fire! Let us all continue to worship God in Truth and Spirit.

## Learn To Discern

Continued From Page 3

and earplugs and 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 . . ." (Matthew 15:13).

**ROSE-COLORED GLASSES.** How many times have we approached one about some sin only to hear, "I don't see anything wrong with it." The Scriptures are read, but only to hear, "Well, I don't see it that way." And, they don't. Prejudice glasses are keeping them from seeing the truth. But God's word has not changed, and will not, so they must take off the shades.

The Bible says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 17:15).

Sin is today spoken of as negative goodness, immature development, misdirection, a defect of temper, a mere mistake. Lust is called love, hard-core pornography is art, lying is coloring the truth, dishonesty is "good business," car theft is joy-riding, homosexuality is an alternate lifestyle, gambling is revenue enhancement, drunkenness is alcoholism, baby-killing is abortion and adultery is "spicing up a marriage."

Modesty is old fashioned quaintness, chastity is neurotic inhibition, standing faith is termed "standing in the way of progress," living in sin is a trial marriage and prayer is psychological feedback (Winkler).

**TELESCOPE.** A telescope is good for seeing objects a great way off, but is useless for anything close by. This is the person who knows all about every sin committed by another's family, but cannot seem to see anything wrong in his own. Paul wrote, "I charge thee . . . that

thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (I Timothy 5:21).

God held Eli responsible for his family's behavior: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:13; cf. 2:12). Although he confronted them with the error (2:22-25), it was too little, too late.

Some today quickly condemn an action in someone they know, but when one of their own is guilty of it, the telescope does not allow them to focus on it. For instance, before a son or daughter became involved in an adulterous relationship, they were strongly opposed to divorce and remarriage for just any cause (as they should have been, Matthew 19:9), but changed when it entered the family. Sometimes one family will condemn another who misses services (Hebrews 10:25), while they dress

immodestly (I Timothy 2:9). One might castigate another for dancing (Galatians 5:19-21), when he/she gossips (Leviticus 19:16). One will condemn a drunk (Ephesians 6:18), who lies or curses (Ephesians 5:25, 29). Let's wear the jewel of consistency.

**BIFOCALS--** "Your sin looks big, mine is small." Some people cannot seem to focus on the beam closeup, but they can clearly see the mote far off (Matthew 7:3-5). Self-criticism is much more difficult for most than "other fellow" criticism. This is hypocrisy, the Pharisee's trade, "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4).

Paul spoke of the danger of young widows being supported by the church. "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but *tattlers also and busybodies*, speaking things which they ought not" (I

Timothy 5:13; cf. II Thessalonians 3:11). Christians will suffer, but they should never suffer for being "a busybody in other men's matters" (I Peter 4:15).

The Bible teaches us to not ignore sin. We are to help our brother "out of the ditch" (Galatians 6:1, 2; James 5:20), for we really are "our brother's keeper" (cf. Genesis 4:9). At the same time, we must be careful to first clean out our own closets for blind men do not make good guides (Matthew 15:14).

**MAGNIFYING GLASS--** "I cannot forget my sins." Some Christians keep their forgiven sins under a magnifying glass, never out of the conscience's eye. If one has done what God said to do to have sins removed (cf. Acts 22:16; I John 1:7-9), then God has forgotten them (Hebrews 8:12). Christians need good "forgetters" (Philippians 3:13).

Let us all learn to discern about sin.

## The Last Days

Continued From Page 2

3. Thus, we are now living in the "last days," and we have been living in them for nearly 2,000 years. We read, "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke

in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:1, 2a). Here the Hebrew writer makes it clear that the last days were currently in effect. If the last

days were already in effect at that time, then we must conclude that they continue to today.

Summary:

1) The church was to begin in the "last days";

2) The church was established on Pentecost; hence, the "last days" (i.e., the Christian age) began on that occasion;

3) Thus, the "last days" continue to today and will not

cease until Christ returns (I Corinthians 15:24-26).

Adairsville, GA 30103.

June 24, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- What Dr. Kevorkian And Planned Parenthood Have In Common
- "Women Preachers?"
- The Convictions Of The Lost
  - Did Christ Die In Vain?
  - "Most Of A Minute"
- The Foolishness Of God
  - Problems Which Can Be Solved

Volume 30 Number 26

(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

## "Be Of Good Courage"

Allen Webster

Christianity is no place for weaklings! A sign was seen in a small restaurant, saying, "If our steak is too tough for you, get out; this is no place for weaklings!" Our faith will be tested.

Five volunteers were needed to undertake a dangerous mission, so the general lined up his men and asked volunteers to take one step forward, while he turned his back. When he again faced them, the line was still intact. He expressed disappointment that not a man was brave enough to volunteer, until a corporal interrupted and said, "We have all stepped forward, sir!"

Those in the Lord's army need courage. Christians have many great battles to face, and without courage, they will never outlast the enemy.

### A REVIEW OF FEAR IN THE BIBLE

Man has always been a fearing creature. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve feared God and hid in the Garden (Genesis 3:8); Abraham had to be told not to fear God (Genesis 15:1); the children of Israel feared God's voice at Sinai (Exodus 19:16); the ten spies spread fear throughout the ranks of God's people (Numbers 13:1-16); twenty-two thousand cowards left Gideon's army (Jude 7:3; cf. Deuteronomy 20:8); Israel's army feared the Philistines (I Samuel 17:11, 24); Saul feared David (I Samuel 18:12) and the Philistines (I Samuel 28:5, 20); and Hezekiah feared Sennacherib (II Kings 19:8-19). The thing that Job greatly feared came upon him (3:25) and the man who

grows old without God learns to fear everything (Ecclesiastes 12:5).

In the New Testament, the disciples feared a storm (Matthew 8:26), what they thought was a ghost (Matthew 14:26) and a mob in Gethsemane's Garden (Matthew 26:56). The one talent man hid his talent because he was afraid (Matthew 25:25). The grave watchers fainted in fear when the angels rolled away the stone (Matthew 28:4). Nicodemus came to Jesus by night (John 3:1) and Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple (John 19:38). Peter followed afar off (Luke 22:54). Apparently, John Mark lost his courage when crossing the mountains of Perga as he turned back on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). John was afraid when he had seen a vision (Revelation 1:17).

### THE RESULTS OF FEAR IN OUR LIVES

*Fear can cause indecisiveness.* Some would not confess Christ for fear of public opinion (John 12:42; cf. Psalm 3:6). To decide not to decide, is to choose to fail (II Thessalonians 1:6-9). "He who walks in another's tracks leaves no footprints" (Reader's Digest). Others refuse to confess sins for fear that others will talk about them (cf. Acts 8:22; James 5:16).

*Fear can cripple good works.* Many good things never get off the planning table because Christians are afraid of failure (Matthew 25:24-30). The "grasshopper complex" inflicts many congregations (Numbers 13:1-16). As a rabbit caught in the headlights is paralyzed

by fear, many churches get over run by evil because leaders are too paralyzed to take a stand.

F. D. Roosevelt told America, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." He knew the cost and the risks involved in battling the Axis powers in World War II. But he understood that our greatest enemy was our own fear, for fear is the enemy of success.

There is an Eastern legend which says that a pilgrim met the Plague and asked, "Where are you going?" The Plague replied: "I am going to Bagdad to kill five thousand people." A few days later the pilgrim met the Plague again and charged him with killing fifty thousand instead of five. "Oh, no!" said the Plague, "I killed only five thousand; the others died of fear."

Seneca's statement is true: "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."

*Fear can cause one to be ashamed of the Gospel* (Romans 1:16; Galatians 4:16). One retorted, "Silence is golden, but sometimes it is just plain yellow." T. B. Larimore used to say, "I would be afraid to be ashamed and ashamed to be afraid." Fear can cause one to "flee to Egypt" as it did Urijah (Jeremiah 26:21). It causes Christians to remain quiet when a brother is deserving of a rebuke (cf. Jeremiah 1:8; Ezekiel 2:6; Galatians 2:11) or needs to be made aware of a personal offense (Matthew 18:15-18). Paul said that Timothy had not been given the spirit of fear or cowardice (II Timothy 2:7), and neither have God's

people today.

*Fear causes some to fail to develop their talents.* How many might now be qualified to be elders, deacons, teachers, soul winners, or song leaders if they did not fear failure (Matthew 25:24-30; James 4:17)?

*Fear causes some to lie* (Joshua 9:24). How many lies have been told because one fears the consequences of telling the truth? One lie leads to another and they all lead to hell (Revelation 21:8).

### THE REMEDY FOR FEAR IS FAITH

Courage has always been attributed to faith. The old Caleb was ready to face giants because he knew the Lord would be with him (Joshua 14:12). The young David's courage waxed strong as he said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (I Samuel 17:32).

The three Hebrew youths resolved to burn rather than turn (if God chose not to save them) (Daniel 3:17, 18). Daniel decided prayer was worth a night in the lion's den, and opened his windows to pray as he always had (Daniel 6:10, 11). A Bible school teacher asked her students why Daniel was not eaten by the lions. One little boy replied, "Because he was all backbone!"

Vashti and Esther demonstrated that women can manifest courage (Esther 1:1-22; 4:8, 16). Ezra's faith in God enabled him to lead in rebuilding the temple in the face of Tatnai, Shetharboznai and the Apharsachites who vigorously opposed him (Ezra 5:6-11).

Joseph of Arimathea and

Nicodemus showed a change of heart by boldly craving the body of Jesus that it might be given a decent burial (Mark 15:43; John 19:38, 39). The apostles were ready to be imprisoned and die rather than disobey God (Acts 4:18-21, 29, 31; 5:29, 33). Paul showed courage in rebuking a fellow apostle who had fallen into sin (Galatians 2:11-14).

As with the fearful disciples on Galilee, Christ wants us to be brave when facing the storms of life (Matthew 8:26). It may be the storm of temptation when we feel we just cannot go on (I Corinthians 10:13). It may be the storm of loneliness (Matthew 28:20). It may be a storm of pain as our bodies face disease, injury, or old age (Acts 7:59; II Corinthians 11:22-28; Philemon 9; Ezekiel 18:26). It may be the storm of financial reverses (Revelation 2:9). It may be a storm of persecution for righteousness sake (Matthew 5:10, 11; 10:28; II Timothy 3:12; Revelation 2:9, 10, 24). It may be a storm of marital trouble or parental problems (I Samuel 25:3-35; Leviticus 10:1-3).

Fear is a serious problem, because it indicates a "little faith." It can be soul-damning, for the "fearful" are among those listed in "Hell's Hall of Fame" (Revelation 21:8). Let each Christian summon his courage and wage a winning warfare!

--Tiplersville Church of Christ.

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# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Words Of Truth

Lectureship

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## What Dr. Kevorkian And Planned Parenthood Have In Common

Glenn Colley

The societal changes about us are crying for rational observation and serious adjustment. Some days the move toward the immoral seems to have the speed and momentum of a locomotive.

We make a mistake to take sacred things for granted. They must be defended. 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), and we must wrestle.

We enjoy thinking that human life will always be sacred in America. After all, our forefathers coined the phrase and championed the values, "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," when designing the forms into which the foundation of our nation would be poured. Life is presumed to be sacred. However, the power of darkness will work to rob us of this.

Read again and ponder passages condemning murder:

Exodus 20:13 -- "Thou

shalt not kill."

I John 3:15 -- "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Galatians 5:19-21 -- "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these . . . envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; for the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Abortion is murder. Only those whose heart have been touched by the deceit of darkness and its prince, advocate and practice abortion. There are none so innocent as unborn children. There are none so guilty as they who would shed their blood.

But what is the heart behind abortion? Among other characteristics, (self-deception, power over the destiny of the weak, survival of the fittest, selfishness, etc.), there is the lack of appreciation for the sacred nature of life, and a lack of fear for God.

What Americans used to

consider universal matters of common sense are now being called radical. Mary Guy, chairwoman of the political science department at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, recently suggested to the Associated Press that those who believe abortion should be legal only in cases of rape or incest or when the mother's life is threatened, are "ultra-right wing" and "ultra conservatives."

And what about euthanasia -- the killing of those we think will soon die anyway. Are we to the place where we believe death is a treatment option for doctors to prescribe? Are we ready to buy into the notion that suicide is an act of logic and courage and euthanasia should be treated as a civil right?

According to U.S. News and World Report, (April 25, 1994, pg. 31), there is an arrangement in the Netherlands which allows physicians to help patients die and avoid litigation as long as certain safeguards are followed. "The patient, for example, has to be terminally ill, in considerable pain, and

mentally competent and must repeatedly express a wish to die." What's the result? According to the article, among the Dutch, "in slightly more than half of euthanasia cases . . . doctors kill without the patients' knowledge or consent." That figure comes from the government's own pro-euthanasia report in 1991 . . . 1,040 people were killed by doctors who acted on their own, without a request from the patient. . . In 45% of cases of involuntary euthanasia in hospitals, doctors didn't even consult family members . . . Doctors determine how euthanasia is practiced. They establish the diagnosis. They inform the patient if they want. They decide whether to report it to the authorities. Most cases are not reported.

Do you believe abortion and euthanasia are linked? Are they somehow alike? Yes. They are alike because most, if not all, of the arguments used to justify killing the unborn, can be used with equal force in arguing the right to kill the elderly or handicapped. Is

this editor the only one who links the two? No. According to the U.S. News article, "younger, particularly college-educated women, tend to support assisted suicide, often seeing euthanasia as comparable to a woman's right -- based on privacy and self-determination -- to choose abortion. It is a parallel argued by both Kevorkian and abortion-rights leaders. Planned Parenthood's Pamela Maraldo proclaims: Choice is choice."

The pied piper of "assisted" suicide in America today is Dr. Kevorkian. Twenty-or-so people have died with his help. The largest promoter of abortion in America is Planned Parenthood. There are 1.5 million unborn babies slain through abortion in America each year.

Don't be swept away from truth by the humanistic arguments these people are pushing on us. God's word is truth, and murder is murder. Use your voice for righteousness.

## "Women Preachers?"

Mike Benson

"I've noticed that many denominations today have women preachers. Do you think there's anything wrong with this. . . ? I would like to have your opinion."

Instead of giving my opinion, let's go to the scriptures and allow them to address/answer your question. Please note:

1. Women are not permitted to have dominion

or authority over a man. The inspired (II Timothy 3:16) apostle Paul wrote, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. *And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man*, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:11, 12). To "teach" means to give instruction. To "usurp" means to exercise authority on one's own account, to domineer" (Vine's).

Consider: a) How could a woman do the work of an evangelist (reprove, rebuke, exhort -- II Timothy 4:2) and yet refrain from teaching over and usurping authority over a man? (b) How could a woman "rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2:15) in light of the fact that God does not permit her to usurp authority over a man? c) How could a woman preach and  
Continued On Page 4



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# The Convictions Of The Lost

Neal Pollard

The lost are convicted, too. Do not let anyone get away with saying that they are not. Some of the strongest beliefs held, some of the most fully persuaded minds, and some of the most determined hearts are attached to lost individuals. Even in the Bible, one finds the deepest rooted convictions in the heart of the alien sinner. If one wants to find a people wholly dedicated, he should take a trip into Noah's world (see Genesis 6:5). If one wants to find a people completely set in a given pursuit, he should visit with King Solomon about the sons of men (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Now, we should abhor rather than admire the lifestyle of the lost. This statement, if it has ever been true, applies to the people who spread themselves around Pilate's judgment seat. Grounded in their hatred and jealousy of Jesus, the chief priests, the elders, and the persuaded multitude had as their singular focus the destruction of Jesus. They

wanted Him gone, and any way they could do this was the way that they were going to try. The rulers of the people had tried to ridicule, embarrass, trap, frustrate, tempt, and discourage Him, but they had failed. One would think that, after three and a half years of trying, they would have given up on their task. But, they were convicted.

While we hold them in contempt and view them with pity because of their wretched sinfulness, let us also notice that the mob who finally "got rid of Jesus" (actually, they fulfilled God's scheme for their and our redemption) was a crowd from whom we could learn a few lessons.

**THEY WERE UNITED** (Matthew 27:22). Pilate asked them what he should do with Jesus Christ. ALL of them said, "Let him be crucified." No dissension is recorded by Matthew. Together, they forced a Roman governor to submit to their wishes. How unfortunate that they were united to do evil.

When the righteous are

united under the proper standard (Ephesians 4:13), "how good and how pleasant it is . . ." (Psalm 133:1). Think of the untold good Christ's disciples can do under the banner of brotherly love (Hebrews 13:1), outdone only by our love, devotion, and obedience to the Lord (Hebrews 5:9).

**THEY WERE DECISIVE** (Matthew 27:21, 22). There were no long committee meetings. There were no endless business meetings. They did not vacillate in this moment of decision. Pilate knew who they wanted crucified and who they wanted released. Though iniquitous, their decision was most expedient for their stated goal.

The Lord's church in most places does an adequate job of planning its local work. Alas, in some cases, their best laid plans get lost somewhere between the forming and the fulfilling. No congregation wants to rashly enter any endeavor -- whether it be picking up the support of an extra missionary or the

purchase of a new songbook. Yet, at times, the church is overcautious and ponderous in discharging its responsibilities. Surely God was thrilled at the decisive way the disciples in the early church mobilized, spread the gospel, and reached the lost. The book of Acts is the model of decisiveness for today's church.

**THEY ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY** (Matthew 27:25). Pilate wanted to know who was going to take moral responsibility for killing the just Jesus (24). Seemingly without hesitation, "all the people . . . said, His blood be on us, and on our children." They collectively pointed the finger of guilt toward themselves. Later, when Peter's Pentecost preaching pricked their hearts, in a different way they took responsibility for this heinous act (Acts 2:36-37).

Every person must take responsibility for his actions. Everyone will reap what he, individually, has sown (Galatians 6:7-8). In the congregational setting, each

autonomous body must accept responsibility for what goes on among its members. When congregations individually begin to accept responsibility for themselves, heretofore "taboo" (?) subjects like church discipline, modesty, fornication, social drinking, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, and the like will again be addressed courageously and frequently from the pulpit, the eldership, the Bible classrooms, and the general membership.

We do not admire those responsible for slaying the sinless Savior. They were callous-hearted wretches darkened by the night of sin. However, they, amidst their bleak chore, teach us the power of a united people ready and eager to stand accountable for what they decided to do. Churches will grow who follow God's blueprint for His Kingdom with enthusiasm and conviction. Let us maintain our convictions in "well doing" (Galatians 6:9).

## Did Christ Die In Vain?

Johnny Ramsey

In the book of Galatians, Paul makes it clear that our Lord went to the cross in vain if Judaism was still the standard to follow. Later in that same epistle, the great apostle stated that he only gloried in the events of Calvary. In Hebrews 2:9 the inspired penman reminds us that Jesus tasted of death for every man by the grace of God! The tragic events of Golgotha became the sterling hope for a lost and dying world. The most important moment in history was the death of our Savior and the efficacy of His blood is the dearest price ever paid for redemption.

"Oh Cross, that liftest up my head, /I dare not ask to hide from Thee. /I lay in dust life's glory dead /And, from the ground, there blossoms red /Life -- that shall endless be!"

People today who still pay allegiance to the Old Testament or the Ten Commandments evidently have not read and applied several succinct passages and principles. Here are five valuable thoughts that magnify the necessity of following the covenant sealed in the blood of Christ: Hebrews 10:9, 10; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20; Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3. These dynamic verses, in clarion tones, proclaim that Jesus died to take away the first covenant and establish the second. His blood ushered in the New Testament, which is everlasting. It will not be replaced, removed or superseded. We are dead to the Law given at Sinai and are directly answerable to a more glorious arrangement that deals with attitudes and motives as well as the

commands of the Gospel by which we shall be judged (Romans 2:16). The words of Christ (John 12:48) and not the life and teachings of Moses, Abraham and David will face us in the final day!

The Redeemer died in vain if we think we can earn a place in heaven. He gave Himself for our sins (Galatians 1:4), and by His stripes we are healed (I Peter 2:25). Grace and mercy form the roadway to glory (Acts 20:24; Titus 3:5-7). Pardon and cleansing emanate from God's throne and not our feelings (Jeremiah 10:23). The heavenly Father did not send the Son to condemn but, rather, to save (John 3:17; I John 4:14): "Out of the ivory palaces /Into a world of woe /Only His great eternal love /Made my Savior go."

Grateful recipients of such Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Edwin Markham wrote a poem entitled "Where Love Is, God Is," in which a cobbler had a dream that Jesus would visit his shop on a certain day. The dream was so real that when he awoke, he began preparing his home. The day came, and he waited. But Jesus did not come. Instead, a beggar came and asked for a pair of shoes, which the cobbler quickly made, and sent him on his way. Later another knock at the door - but instead of Jesus, it was an old woman who was hungry. He fed and helped her, and sent her on her way. Finally, in the evening, a last knock at the door produced a lost child whom the cobbler recognized, and quickly returned to his mother. "Jesus," the man cried, "Why didn't you come?"

Jesus replied, "I kept my word. I've been to your house three times today. I was the beggar, the woman and the child."

Jesus said in Matthew 25:40 regarding our good deeds, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

# The Foolishness Of God

G. F. Raines

That which to worldly people seems to be the foolishness of God "is wiser than men" (I Corinthians 1:25). God says: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

Nothing that God requires men to do is foolish, although we are not always wise enough to be able to see the

divine wisdom on which his commandments are based.

Inasmuch as God's thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8), "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

As John W. May says:

"His plans are always reasonable. They are not always fashionable or understandable, but they are reasonable because He is in them . . . The plans of God

are always rewarding. We may do things our way and miserably fail. Plans without God, or plans that ignore Him, are always unfruitful. Though He does not always do things our way, He does things for our good."

Faithful Christians "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Those who substitute their

own will for the will of God practice a religion that is as fruitless and useless as sterile desert land. It has been well said that, "We can never have spiritual power until we are implicitly obedient to all that we know of God's will regarding our own personal lives."

Concerning the self-willed Jews' substitution of their own will for God's will, the Apostle Paul said: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer

to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:1-3).

## Problems Which Can Be Solved

Cecil Corkren

Having problems is not so bad. Someone has said, "there is a special place reserved for people who are problem free." It is called the cemetery. We know that God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, and acts with a hand that never fails. Every Christian has problems. Paul

is an example of problems on every hand (II Corinthians 11:13-28). He not only had problems with false teachers, but with false brethren. If we are faithful Christians Paul said, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL SUFFER PERSECUTIONS" (II Timothy 3:12).

We should not have a

persecuted complex, but accept the fact that being a Christian there are crosses to bear, and to bear a cross is painful (Matthew 16:24). When problems arise, and they will, follow Peter's suggestion "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (I Peter 5:7).

## Giving

**When he has more than he can eat,  
To feed the stranger's not a feat.  
When he has more than he can spend,  
It isn't hard to give or lend.  
Who gives but what he'll never miss  
Will never know what giving is.  
He'll win few praises from the Lord  
Who does but what he can afford.  
The widow's mite to heaven went  
Because real sacrifice it meant.**

## Did Christ Die In Vain?

Continued From Page 3  
immeasurable compassion will always be ready to obey commands issued by the One who bore our sins in His own body (I Peter 2:24). Many verses clearly etch upon sincere hearts the joy of doing the will of God lest Jesus died in vain. Some are: John 15:13, 14; I John 2:4; 5:3; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:14; Acts 2:36-42.

Christ died in vain at least for those who reject His will, if His followers war against themselves, break the Savior's

heart and violate His prayer in John 17:20, 21. Christ did not leave the beauty of heaven and come vicariously to earth to see the cause of redemption rent asunder by petty people and shallow brethren. While the world struggles in the throes of Satan, how can the Lord's army be shattered by division and animosity between its soldiers and effectively tell the world the sweet story of salvation? When we reflect upon the marvelous words of an old gospel song, may we

determine that Christ did not die in vain. Let us, in the harmony and beauty of the glad tidings we share, go forth as a solid garrison of loyal troops, in the name of Jesus, to conquer Satan and sin! "In loving kindness Jesus came /My soul in mercy to reclaim /And from the depths of sin and shame /Through grace He lifted me."

We should stand amazed that heaven cared enough to allow the death of Christ to become a reality. We owe such love our very lives. May

it never be said of us that we lived in such ingratitude that Jesus gave Himself in vain. Through the veil of His flesh, we have access to a new and living way (Hebrews 10:19, 20). It is nothing short of a tragedy, therefore, to live and die in sin (John 8:21). The songwriter was very discerning when he wrote, "He bore it all that I might live." Such abundant living (John 10:10) is the result of an unselfish and powerful death (I Corinthians 15:54-57). "In that old rugged Cross

/Stained with blood so divine /There is a wondrous attraction for me /For the dear Lamb of God /Left His glory above /To pardon and sanctify me."

The burden of sin was lifted at Calvary. Praise God for such an unspeakable gift (II Corinthians 9:15).

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Continued From Page 2  
not violate this verse? The answer? She couldn't.

2. **But this is not to say that Christian women are in some way inferior to Christian men** (Galatians 3:26-28). On the contrary, God would have women fulfill a role in the body of Christ -- but a different role.

Sidney White asks "Does the fact that one person is an employer over another as his employee make the employee inferior to the employer? Certainly not. This same is true with the relationship established by God for men and women in the church."<sup>1</sup>

3. **There are many things which women can, and in**

## "Women Preachers?"

**fact, must do in the church which do not violate God's word.** For example:

-Older women can teach young women (Titus 2:3-5).

-Mothers can instruct their children (Proverbs 1:8; II Timothy 1:5).

-Wives can join with their husbands, in a private setting, (as Priscilla did) and discuss

the truth with those men who are in error (Acts 18:26).

F. LaGard Smith states, "We may never fully understand why women are called to silence in the discernment and public proclamation of the written word. But our submission to God demands our obedient response."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sidney White, "Women's

Role In The Church," God Hath Spoken, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup>F. LaGard Smith, "The Sounds of Silence," Men of Strength For Women Of God, p. 247.

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**See Inside Articles:**

- The Form Of Idolatry Church Members Sometimes Practice
- "Raise My Children?"
- Lessons From Leviticus
- Are We Rushing Through Worship?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Can A Child Of God Fall From Grace?
- "I Would Not Have You Ignorant"

Volume 30 Number 27

(USPS 691-760)

# The Words C Truth

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

## Where Are The Nine?

Allen Webster

Please read Luke 17:11-19. We encounter in the story

TEN BEGGING LEPERS (17:12-14).

They all needed mercy (17:12). The human body is exposed to a number of fearful maladies. Sin has sown its ugly seeds of decay and produced a harvest of distressing sicknesses. Leprosy was (is) one of the most dreaded diseases known to man.

Leprosy advances slowly but surely. It starts with sores; the hair is bleached white; the body becomes a mass of scales. Then, it eats away at bodily tissues until the body itself begins to be consumed. The nose, the lips disappear; fingers decay and fall off; joint after joint separates, and life lingers amidst desolation, dooming the wretched victim to die piecemeal. Eventually, the vital organs cease to function and death follows. The men Jesus saw were dead while they lived.

They were "afar off" -- that is, socially ostracized. They were not allowed to enter towns or villages, and were required to shout, "Tame," "Tame," ("Unclean!" "Unclean!") when someone approached. This served as a sort of quarantine to keep others from being infected (Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 5:2-3; cf. II Kings 5:5). The legal distance which these unfortunates were compelled to keep from passers-by was

a hundred paces. They were often found near city gates begging travelers for handouts. Everywhere they went, crowds pulled back in terror.

The leper bore in his body outward and visible tokens of sin in the soul. Sin is to the soul what leprosy is to the body. In the Old Testament, leprosy was often inflicted as punishment for sins (cf. Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah). Lepers were considered dead while they lived; they were walking parables of death. Sinners are living dead (Ephesians 2:1). Sin separates from God and the sacred society of saints (Isaiah 59:1, 2; I John 1:3, 6, 7). It terminates in the horrors of a guilty death and, worse than leprosy, sin ends not with the grave, but with everlasting misery in unending death (Revelation 20:14-15).

Lepers were considered unclean. Sin makes all "unclean in the eyes of the Lord" regardless of race or social standing (Revelation 3:4). Lepers were isolated from others. Sin isolates (Psalm 1:5).

Lepers were considered unclean. Sin makes all "unclean in the eyes of the Lord" regardless of race or social standing (Revelation 3:4). Lepers were isolated from others. Sin isolates (Psalm 1:5). Lepers were without hope. Sinners, apart from Christ, are without hope for eternity (Ephesians 2:12).

They all begged for mercy

(17:13) -- "lifted up their voices." They attracted his attention with their hoarse, sad cry. This time they were not asking for alms (cf. Matthew 8:2, 3), but healing. It was an expression of faith - affliction often increases faith. The eyes and ears of Jesus were ever open to the cry of the distressed.

They all received mercy (17:14) -- "go and show . . . to the priest." They called Him "Jesus" (Savior), so He tests their belief in His authority. A priest had to declare them ceremonially clean and present them with a certificate before they could rejoin normal society (Leviticus 13:1-6; 14:1-3; Matthew 8:4; Luke 5:14). "As they went," they were healed -- after obedience, not before (cf. Hebrews 5:8, 9).

ONE THANKING LEPPER (17:15-16)

He was grateful. The voice of prayer became the voice of praise. We are not told how far they had gone before they found that they were healed. They were all happy; but one was happy and grateful. We are told that lepers lost their voices; this man's first strong words were expressions of thanksgiving.

He was a Samaritan -- the one least expected to return. Virtue is often found where it is least expected (Luke 10:30-36; Matthew 8:5-10; 15:26-28). In stating that the man who returned was a Samaritan, it is implied that the nine others (who did not

turn back) were Jews. The Jews could well be called "the children of privilege," due to their early exposure to God's power and Word. Though an outcast from Jewish society, he is the one who receives the praise of God.

NINE FORGETTING LEPERS (17:17-19)

Jesus is disappointed and asks, "Where are the nine?" These men were Jews. Though trained to be grateful for God's blessings, they are the ones who do not turn back. Often least comes when most is expected (Isaiah 5:1-2). Blessings constantly received may be least appreciated. The Swiss peasant who lives on the Alpine slopes sees no grandeur in the snow-clad summits on which his eyes are always resting. The sailor who lives by the sea hears no music in the "ocean's roar."

Here is the old story of the thankless heart and the silent tongue. All were ready to receive a blessing; only one was ready to be thankful for it. There was faith enough for prayer, but not faith enough

for praise. They had stood the test of faith, but failed in the test of love. Silence became the voice of ingratitude.

These were closer to the Healer in affliction, than in health. Many preachers have heard those in hospitals say, "If the Lord would let me get well, I will go to church." Others overtaken by unexpected calamity -- fire, shipwreck -- bow knees that for long years refused to bow, and part lips that before uttered the adorable Name only in blasphemy, in pleadings for mercy. But, alas, when they get well, or escape death, they do not fulfill their promises. They give no thanks; they offer no praise. They go about their usual employments to mingle in the scenes of pleasure and sin, as if nothing had occurred.

Too often we are tempted to follow the example of the nine instead of the one. We are more ready to ask for blessings, than we are to thank God for the ones we enjoy. Does Jesus still ask, "Where are the nine?"

**Words Of Truth  
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# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## The Form Of Idolatry Church Members Sometimes Practice

Glenn Colley

How would you define idolatry? Webster says, "Worship of an idol or idols; excessive veneration for any person or object."

A sad reflection occurs when we remember the false gods described in the Old Testament -- Molech, Ashtaroth, Baal, Dagon, Diana, and that awful calf of gold at Mount Sinai. Idolatry is condemned in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Exodus 20:4 says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God . . ."

I John 5:21 says, "My little children, keep yourselves from idols."

But Webster's definition is too limited. God, in His word, expanded the definition in Colossians 3:5 where Paul penned the words "Mortify . . .

covetousness, which is idolatry." Notice, please, that in covetousness is no graven image made of stone or wood or metal. But it IS idolatry!

This demonstrates the fact that God sees deeper than the outer man with his earthly actions. He sees the heart behind the actions (I Chronicles 28:9). For that reason, God equates the man who worships Baal or Dagon, and the man who is covetous, with the word "idolatry." They both take the allegiance which rightfully belongs to Jehovah and give it to something or someone else.

Perhaps the greatest threat to our individual Christian practice is the heart of idolatry. The idolater, who was created by God, and is sustained by Him, says, "I don't like the parameters set by God in which a person can obtain righteousness. I want to view myself as righteous, but I'm not content with His boundaries. I will pull up His fence posts, so far as my life is concerned, and set them in different places.

Denominationalism is from a heart styled like the idolaters. The heart says, "I see the New Testament and the teaching of the one church of Christ Jesus. But I prefer a system of many different churches, all following their own path to the same heavenly destination. I prefer to design a different name for the church. I prefer another name for members of the church, and I prefer an amended plan of salvation which doesn't require baptism." Is that idea not the great-great-grandson of ancient idolatry? It certainly is!

Another example is seen in the life of the man who refuses to be a member of the church, or the man who has left the church. He says, "I just don't think 'going to church' is important to go to heaven. I'm living a good Christian life without coming to church." This heart too is borne of idolatry. This man has reset, in his mind, the parameters of righteousness so that they don't include eating the

Lord's supper with Christians on the Lord's day, giving as we've been prospered, or praying and singing with the assembled church. The serious Bible student knows that Jesus died for the church. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." I Timothy 3:15 says, ". . . in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." This wayward member would do well to consider how God views idolatry.

There are members of the Lord's church who have reset the boundary stakes with regard to morality. They've read the scriptures and heard preaching regarding morality in our speech (Colossians 3:8, 9), our dress (I Timothy 2:9, 19; I Peter 3:3, 4), our activities with members of the opposite sex (I Corinthians 6:18; Matthew 5:28, Matthew 19:9), and our recreation (Romans 12:9). And still some church members will violate God's will in these matters.

Perhaps they will justify their known rebellion to God's word by saying, "My God is not like that. He doesn't care about things like this," or, "I've learned from our preacher that grace covers things like this, so I'm not really concerned. I think the Christians who object are the one's with the problem." What is this but idolatry? We want righteousness, but we prefer to have it on our terms.

Let's all work to empty ourselves of anything akin to idolatry. The church of Christ is only restored to her purity when we seek to follow Christ's will over ours. May we all maintain tender hearts regarding the sacred scriptures, and hold His will in honesty and sincerity. With this heart we "Study to show ourselves approved of God, workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

## "Raise My Children?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mr. Benson,

"I am concerned about raising my children in today's permissive society. What can I do to guide them in the right way?"

You do well to be concerned about properly raising your children. David said, "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). Paul said, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up

in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). With these two passages in mind, let me encourage you to study the following:

1. Talk about God's Word and will as part of your everyday conversation. We often talk about "everything under the sun" to our children, but then fail to discuss the most important subjects. Moses said, "And these words which I command you today 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" (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).

2. Avoid the "Don't do as I do, but do as I say" policy. Role models are important to a child. The wise man said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" Continued On Page 4



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# Lessons From Leviticus

**Johnny Ramsey**

One of the lesser known sections of the Bible is the Old Testament book known as Leviticus. However, it is necessary to know the contents of this section of Scripture if one would learn the background of many references in the New Testament. Actually, the book of Leviticus is of monumental import regarding holiness, worship, efficacy and the priesthood of believers. Perhaps, the major epochal thrust of this rich and vital stanza in Holy Writ is found in I Peter 1:16 that reflects a statement from Leviticus:

"Be ye holy;  
for I am holy."

From chapter seventeen of the book of Numbers and subsequent passages we learn of the value of the Levites in God's scheme of things. From this tribe and the family of Aaron came the high priests in Israel. They occupied a special place in heaven's plan. On the famous Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) those priests, through the years, officiated in the Scapegoat arrangement that pointed toward the coming of our Redeemer. The tremendous statement of John 1:29 hearkens back to that occasion and forever sets forth the supremacy of

Christianity. John the Immerser, proclaimed of Jesus:

"Behold, the Lamb of God,  
which taketh away  
the sin of the world."

We should daily thank the Father above that we do not have to trust in a dumb animal and a sinful Levitical priest and the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats for cleansing (Hebrews 10:1-11). How blessed we are to have a new and living way through the veil of Christ's flesh and the shedding of His precious blood (Hebrews 10:19-20)!

"There is a fountain filled  
with blood

Drawn from Immanuel's  
veins

And sinners plunged  
beneath that flood

Lose all their guilty  
stains."

We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (I Peter 1:19) and sustained by the only High Priest that Christianity will ever know -- Jesus Christ, the righteous One (I John 2:1; Hebrews 7:26). Leviticus was just a shadow, a foretaste, of glory divine!

The three great feast days of Judaism are mentioned in Leviticus 23. They all point to the coming of the Messiah. We learn in a powerful passage, in I Corinthians 5:7,

that Christ is our Passover. The feast of Tabernacles was a reminder of Jehovah's providential care for Abraham's seed in the wilderness. Paul tells us in chapter ten of I Corinthians that "the rock that followed them was Christ!" Pentecost was a special day for the Jews also. It served as a reminder of the law that went forth at Sinai and pointed to a powerful occasion in Acts 2 where a harvest of spiritual sowing would come to fruition. It is overwhelming to realize, that when the law God gave through angels to Moses peaked forth at Sinai, that 3,000 were saved and added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:41).

We have heard the  
joyful sound

Jesus saves, Jesus saves  
Spread the tidings  
all around

Jesus saves, Jesus saves."

Truly, redemption's sweet song reflects Leviticus background. We also come to realize that worship, devotion, homage and loyalty were salient themes in Old Testament days. What we offer to our Maker comes from "our own voluntary will" (Leviticus 1:3) and must be according to heaven's mandates. When mankind fails to worship in the beauty

of holiness we do not give God the glory due His name (I Chronicles 16:29). This can only result in alienating ourselves from our Creator. Such was the severe mistake of the sons of Aaron mentioned in the tenth stanza of Leviticus. Similar to Aaron's flippant attitude concerning the golden calf incident was the sinful action of Nadab and Abihu, who offered to God what they deemed best instead of doing what Jehovah commanded. Today we can see definite trends in the same direction of will worship (Colossians 2:18-23) rather than a humble spirit that desires the Father's will (James 4:15). Homage, in spirit and in truth is all that heaven approves (John 4:24). We must offer worship that is according to Truth (John 17:17) and expressed in sincere devotion (Psalms 95:6-7).

"O the pure delight of a  
single hour

That before Thy throne I  
spend

When I kneel in prayer and  
with Thee, O God

I commune as friend with  
Friend!"

Most Bible students would agree that 17:11 is the key verse in Leviticus. It is here that we learn that the life of the flesh is in the blood. We

should all be abundantly grateful that the blood of Christ supercedes the blood of bulls and goats. Hebrews 9:22 makes it clear that without the power efficacy of Calvary's sacrifice we would be forever lost!

Our Savior was alone in Gethsemane (Matthew 26). He was mocked at Gabbatha (John 19) and vicariously died at Golgotha (Luke 23). Yet, by the power of the Holy Spirit, up from the grave He arose (Romans 1:4; 8:11) as the bands of death were burst asunder (Acts 2:24). The shadows of Leviticus became the splendor of New Testament fulfillment.

"When my love to Christ  
grows weak

When for deeper faith I  
seek

Hill of Calvary I go

To thy scenes of fear and  
woe."

The superlative riches of the gospel age reflect the pathos of Leviticus and make us genuinely appreciative of God's eternal purpose. The mural of God's divine love flows from Genesis through Revelation and gives us reason to echo the joy of Revelation 19 . . . The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth!

## Are We Rushing Through Worship?

(From the Gospel Advocate, September 1961)

In several business meetings I have listened to varied suggestions on how the worship could be shortened -- "use more trays," "use an auxiliary table in the rear," "omit a song," "omit all announcements." In all of this thinking there seems to be the underlying premise that a shorter service is a better service -- that efficiency means more efficacy.

Are we rushing through our periods of worship so that we may hasten to feed the poor, to preach to our neighbor, to lift up the heathen? No, we rush so that we can get to a

tasty, sumptuous meal or so we can watch a favorite TV program or take a nap or read the secular paper, or play golf or go for an outing. If none of these things attract us we may rush because we are nervous and have the habit of doing everything in a hurry.

We sing, Take Time To Be Holy, but we are too busy to take time to meditate, to praise, to listen to the Word of God in a relaxed atmosphere. There is pressure by the more worldly members to "pay our respects" to God in the smallest capsule of time possible. Movies and

TV programs are getting longer, but periods of worship are being compressed. Why? Is it because we are so spiritual that we don't need more time to become holy? Or is it a lack of appetite for spiritual food? Do we hunger and thirst after righteousness or do we fret when the Lord's Supper takes more time than a newscast?

Time is precious and we should "redeem the time." Our periods of worship should be planned so that our worship will be most effective. Time should not be Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

With the entrance of spring, we see the annual rush to get the gardens out. For several years, our back yard was decorated with a small vegetable garden. Now every fall I promised myself that this was absolutely the last year I would put out a garden, since my time like yours is limited. But every spring, when the life is revived in the trees and grass my hands began to itch to grip a shovel handle and work in God's soil.

If you've never tried to plan a garden, I recommend it. Aside from having some mighty good eating, there are so many Bible truths that will come alive to you when you do.

Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

A man doesn't plant tomatoes and reap radishes. And he doesn't sow a life away from God, and reap eternity with him in heaven. And who would know that better than gardeners like you and me?

# Can A Child Of God Fall From Grace?

G. F. Raines

In December, 1946, Dr. D. N. Jackson affirmed the following proposition in a debate with Roy E. Cogdill in Lufkin, Texas:

"The Scriptures teach that the child of God, one washed by the blood of Christ, is so saved that he is in a relationship to God beyond the possibility of ever afterwards being lost in hell."

Paul said to the Corinthians:

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Corinthians 15:1, 2).

It is said that an old Baptist preacher said many years ago concerning the word "if" in I Corinthians 15:2: "Brethren, this word 'if' is a very peculiar word; it is in the intolerable mood and everlastin' tense, for it is everlastingly gittin' in somebody's way" (Dalton-Burnett Debate, Gospel Advocate Co., 1897, p. 37).

Only those who have been born again are in the

kingdom of Christ and of God (John 3:3-6); and, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:41, 42).

The Galatians who were trying to be justified by the abrogated Mosaic law had

"fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4; see also 4:21-23).

Paul, writing to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1), said, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

## "I Would Not Have You Ignorant"

Vance Hutton

Paul often made the statement that he did not want his readers to be ignorant of certain things. The phrase "I would not have you ignorant" is found in the Roman letter, the Corinthian letters, and the first letter to the brethren at Thessalonica. Because of the value of souls, Paul did not want people in ignorance. Out of respect for truth and the realization we shall be judged by the same, Paul did not want people in ignorance. Because of concern for the anxieties of others, Paul at times turned ignorance and

darkness into light and knowledge.

Ignorance of the Bible has potential devastating effects. Yet, there is an abundance of ignorance of God's will and way. Paul in Romans 10:3 spoke of some who were ignorant of God's righteousness. Peter in II Peter 3:5 wrote of those who were willingly ignorant. Do these verses also describe our day? We have a Bible. It is available to us in the English translation that we can all read and study. We have ample opportunities to study and cast off the darkness of

ignorance. Yet, most of us could do better in this area than we do. There is a famine in the land of hearing God's word (Amos 8:11) but this one is of our own choosing. We have to spurn ample privileges to continue in this famine.

Let us become better students of God's word. May we crave the word as a baby does milk (I Peter 2:2). Let us hunger and thirst for it (Matthew 5:6). Let us seek and search for knowledge and wisdom as the world does for silver or for a hidden treasure in a field (Proverbs 2:1-5).

Follow the example of the Bereans and search the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). You will be here and in eternity so thankful you did.

Peter in II Peter 3:8 told his readers and us to not be ignorant concerning a certain matter. Our souls hang in the balance unless we learn likewise. Notice the following.

I) BE NOT IGNORANT OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION: God has a plan laid out simply in His word. Learn it and obey to be free (John 8:32).

II) BE NOT IGNORANT OF THE CHURCH: Jesus died for it and is savior of it (Ephesians 5:23). Salvation is therein. It is a part of God's eternal plan. Be not ignorant of it.

III) BE NOT IGNORANT OF TRUE WORSHIP: We must worship and we must be classified as true worshippers (John 4:23). It must be done in spirit and truth with God

the aim of our worship (John 4:24).

IV) BE NOT IGNORANT OF THE LIFE THE LORD DEMANDS OF US ALL: We are held accountable to be people of holiness (Hebrews 12:14), obedient (Hebrews 5:9) and faithful (Matthew 25:21). Search the scriptures to find the demands of our Creator.

V) BE NOT IGNORANT OF DEATH, JUDGMENT AND ETERNITY: The Bible will prepare the obedient for these great upcoming events. Every person alive will deal with these matters. You do not have to be in the dark. We can walk as children of light even in these matters.

It is a serious thing to have access to the Bible. Find the joys of knowing the Lord through His word. A life of an hundred fold awaits.

## Are We Rushing Through Worship?

(From the Gospel Advocate, September, 1961)

Continued From Page 3

wasted, but "efficiency" and "cutting" do not really save time if they reduce our exposure to God and multiply our exposure to the secular world.

Let us take time to be holy -

- time for spiritual songs, for sermons that are long enough to move the sinner and edify the Christian. Let us take time to promote activities of the church which will build us up in the most holy faith -- time for Christians to exhort

one another about giving and living. Time for meditation on the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Time for silence -- to be still and know that God is with us.

## "Raise My Children?"

Continued From Page 2

(Proverbs 22:6). A parents' most effective training will come through his/her own godly example.

3. Administer corrective discipline, in love, as

necessary. Solomon said, "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (Proverbs 13:24). "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way

brings shame to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15). "Do not withhold correction from a child; for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from Hell"

(Proverbs 23:13, 14). The Bible in on way condones child abuse, but it does teach physical punishment. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it

far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). I cannot improve on this inspired counsel.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Attending church services regularly is like making a path through the forest -- the more often you use it, the less obstruction you find in the way.

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July 8, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Forgiving Those Who Sin Against Me
- "For The Ladies . . ."
- Who Is Jesus?
- What Life Is All About
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 30 Number 28  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Zeal Without Knowledge

**M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.**

The other day I was listening to a popular television evangelist. As I listened and watched, I could not help but notice the fervency and zeal with which he taught the large crowd that had assembled. Perhaps even more obvious was his complete lack of knowledge and understanding of God's word, especially on the subject he was studying. I'm reminded of the words of Paul, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

It seems there are many people, both in the world and in the church, who have an

overwhelming zeal for God but who lack the understanding and knowledge of the Bible to properly direct their fervency. There are several Biblical examples of this. Notice: Paul was zealous in the persecution of Christians and thought he was doing God a service (Acts 22:3-5; Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:6); Apollos ". . . taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25); the Corinthian brethren had a desire and zeal for spiritual gifts, yet they lacked understanding as to their purpose (I Corinthians 14).

There are also examples of

those who have knowledge but lack the necessary zeal for God's work. The Laodiceans were neither cold nor hot, but were lukewarm. They knew the truth, and they worshipped God, but they lacked the zeal which God desires (Revelation 3:15-16; Titus 2:14). They were commanded to "be zealous and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

Although zeal is a necessary part of the Christian's life (Titus 2:14), undirected, unlearned and ignorant zeal is very dangerous (Galatians 4:16-18). We must have an unquenchable thirst for God's word (Psalm 119:97; John

4:10-14). We must ". . . hunger and thirst after righteousness . . ." (Matthew 5:6). Our soul should faint for salvation and find its solace in God's word (Psalm 119:81). When this kind of zeal eats us up and God's word burns within us (John 2:17; Jeremiah 20:9; Psalm 39:3) then, and only then, will our zeal come from the proper motivation. A true zeal for God will cause us to seek the truth and find it (Matthew 7:7; John 8:32). An honest zeal for God recognizes its need to be educated and thus accepts correction as Apollos did in Acts 18. An accepted zeal is the one that causes us to

"study to shew thyself approved . . ." (II Timothy 2:15). Finally, a steadfast zeal is one that is founded upon the proper foundation (I Corinthians 3:11), motivated by the proper motivations of love and fear (II Corinthians 5:11, 14) and one that busies itself in the Lord's work (I Corinthians 15:58).

Let us all make sure that our zeal is properly educated. Let us never allow zeal to override knowledge, nor knowledge to override zeal. Zeal and knowledge must work together hand in hand if we desire to be acceptable to God.

--1705 Starview Drive, Salem, VA 24153.

## Who Is Jesus?

**B. J. Clarke**

A huge lump of something -- a stone supposedly -- lay for decades in a shallow brook in North Carolina. People passing that way saw only an ugly lump and passed on. A poor man passing one day saw a heavy lump -- a good thing to hold his door ajar -- so he took it home. A geologist who stopped at the poor man's door one day saw the lump for what it really was -- A LUMP OF GOLD! It was the biggest lump of gold ever found east of the Rockies.

In a similar way, many people looked upon Jesus. Some saw only a Galilean

peasant and turned away. Some saw a prophet and stopped to listen. Some saw the Messiah and worshipped. Some saw the lamb of God and looked to him to save them from their sins. On at least two occasions during his earthly ministry, Jesus asked individuals whom they considered him to be (Matthew 16:13ff; 22:41, 42). In the 1970's, the popular rock opera, Jesus Christ, Superstar depicted Christ as the original hippie. One of the song choruses asks continually, "Who are you?" and never answers.

How would you respond to the question, "Who is

Jesus?" Some folks may ask you, some folks may say, "Who is this Jesus you talk about everyday?" You can answer them by saying, "Jesus is . . ."

### The Fulfillment Of Prophecy

#### 1. He Is The Promised Prophet.

The children of Israel were promised by Moses, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Centuries later the Jews were still looking for that promised Prophet. In fact, the Jews sent Priests and

Levites from Jerusalem to ask John the Baptizer, "Who art thou?" (I John 1:19). They asked John specifically, "Art thou that prophet?" John answered, "No." John went on to explain that he was the one Isaiah prophesied of in Isaiah 40:1-3 but he was not the fulfillment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

The apostle Peter pointed to Jesus Christ as the Prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22-26).

#### 2. He Is The Promised Messiah And The Son Of God.

The Old Testament constantly speaks of one who

would come as the anointed one of God. The entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah addresses the coming of the Messiah. One of the disciples of John the Baptist, a man named Andrew, followed Jesus to his place of abode and spent the day with him. He quickly perceived that Jesus was no ordinary human being. He quickly sought out his brother, Simon Peter, and declared, "We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:39-41). Sometime later, Peter made his own bold affirmation when he said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, Continued On Page 3

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## Forgiving Those Who Sin Against Me

Glenn Colley

Jesus forever settled the question "Is it important that disciples of Christ be a forgiving people?"

He said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14, 15).

See the frankness with which He speaks. This is decided. It's unchangeable.

But this teaching must also be seen alongside the teaching of Jesus in Luke 17:3 -- "Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Matthew 18:15-17

says to go to the offending brother and tell him his fault, in hopes of his repentance. If that doesn't work, take one or two with you. If that fails, tell it to the church.

Is this a contradiction in the teaching of Jesus? In one place we are told to be forgiving. In another place we are in essence told to seek an apology, and to seek reconciliation with our offender before forgiving.

Jesus, nailed to His cross, prayed about the forgiveness of his executioners, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). We know from Acts 2 that Jesus didn't intend for those people to be forgiven while brazenly persisting in their sins. He certainly would not dispute the Holy Spirit who revealed the plan of forgiveness to Peter and the rest of the Apostles. By

inspiration Peter told some of those same people, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ . . . Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins . . . "God would forgive them, but only after their repentance.

The conclusion and practical application of these passages is this: Jesus taught us how to be forgiving. We must constantly be aware of the price paid in God's desire to redeem man. He has done so much for us. His is an unspeakable gift. Consequently, we should find it a simple matter to forgive the comparatively minor (in that they are temporal and not eternal) sins of others against us. We are people of gentle

spirits. We don't hold grudges. We rejoice not in iniquity. We 'bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.' We treat people, even those who do us harm, in a way we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12) (I Corinthians 13). Paul wrote, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32).

However, there is a difference in a Christian maintaining a forgiving spirit, and a Christian forgiving people who willfully persist in sin. How can a Christian blindly forgive, while at the same time seeking repentance on the part of others? And how would this apply to elders? Should elders in a church pursue wayward Christians to try to draw them back, or should they

simply "forgive" them with no attempt at accomplishing their repentance? (I Corinthians 5).

Do we truly love a Christian brother or sister when we coolly ignore the fact that they are living in willful violation of God's will and in a lost condition?

The emerging spirit then, when we've been somehow sinned against, is one which desires repentance. This is NOT so that we can obtain prideful personal vindication, NOT so that we can win an argument with another, but rather so that the offender won't continue living away from God. When we are taught by Jesus how to forgive, we will have hearts filled with mercy, and a desire that all will renounce sin and come to God.

For The Ladies . . .

## Be A Doer! James 1:23-25

Cindy Colley

"Father, I prayed for opportunities to tell others Thy will, but alas, when I had one golden chance to interject Thy name in conversation today, I lost the courage and failed miserably. I meant to visit the new neighbors this week with a pie and a smile and invite them to worship services, but instead I allowed the ever important yet all too trivial business of everyday living to crowd it out of my schedule. I do want to be of service, Father, yet sometimes I feel so inadequate. I'm not rich, or powerful or even prominent

in my community. But, even so, Father, I know that even the one-talent man had the potential to double his dividends. Please forgive me, Father, for those times when I have buried my talents. Help me to find strength and wisdom to dig deep and find them, then clean them up and invest them toward those eternal dividends while there is still time."

Likely the sentiments of this prayer have come before God's throne many times throughout the ages. The fact that we are Christian women means that we want to be entire, lacking nothing as we serve the Master. The fact

that we are human means that we sometimes lack much. Inadequacies and failures can be overwhelming. On the other hand, these times of despair, with prayer and determination, can become springboards of accomplishment. Goals that are unattainable to the complacent may be reached by those who have struggled through discouraging times. The value of each opportunity becomes apparent to the Christian who has inventoried her opportunities and her responses to them. Reflective thinking, even with all its frustrations, can be most

productive as we strive to turn our gifts into glory for God.

The Scriptures speak of reflective thinking in James

1:23-25.

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his  
Continued On Page 4



### The Words Of Truth

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# Who Is Jesus?

Continued From Page 1

the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). The woman in John 4 said to Jesus, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Jesus saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).

The miracles performed by Jesus demonstrated his sonship and that he was the Christ sent from God. Nicodemus stated, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (I John 3:2). Near the close of John's record of the gospel, he wrote, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 2:30-31). Of course, the ultimate miraculous demonstration of his sonship was his resurrection from the dead. Paul announced that Jesus

was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

A Jewish soldier had heard much about the character and teaching of Jesus. He went to his rabbi and said, "Rabbi, the Christians say that Christ has already come, when we claim that he is yet to come." "That's right," affirmed the rabbi. The young soldier answered back, "Well, when our Christ comes, what will he have on Jesus Christ?" "That," said the rabbi, "we do not know!" What else could he say? The Jesus of the Bible can never be equaled or surpassed.

**3. He Is The Promised King**  
From Genesis until the time of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, the concept of the coming Kingdom of God is threaded throughout the fabric of Scripture. Genesis 49:10 proclaimed that the sceptre would not depart from Judah. Jesus, our Lord sprang out of Judah and rules today as King of the Kingdom foretold by the prophets.

David was told, "When thy

days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom . . . He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever" (II Samuel 7:12-13). This passage was fulfilled in its immediate sense when Solomon took the throne and built the temple . . . But it was also messianic in its import. This is clearly seen by Peter's words on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore

being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear . . . 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 2:29-33, 36).

The conclusion is obvious. The promise of the Holy Spirit that David's seed would rule upon his throne over the Kingdom was fulfilled by Jesus when he sat down at the right hand of God exalted to receive the Kingdom. The Kingdom was established upon the day of Pentecost. Micah promised that one born in Bethlehem of Judea would become ruler (Micah 5:2). Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Luke 2:4-7) and grew up to become the ruler. Zechariah promised that a king would come to Jerusalem riding upon a colt (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy during his earthly ministry (Mark 11:1-11). Nathanael recognized the truth when he said, "Rabbi, thou art the

Son of God, thou art the king of Israel" (John 1:49). Truly, Jesus is the promised King of Kings and Lord of Lords (I Timothy 6:15).

**4. He Is The Promised Immanuel.**

Approximately seven centuries before it occurred, Isaiah prophesied of the virgin birth of Jesus to Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). Isaiah further prophesied that they would call the child, Immanuel. Matthew informs us that Immanuel, being interpreted is, God with us. Thus, Jesus was not only the Son of God, but also God the Son. The Word was God and the Word became flesh (John 1:1, 14). God was manifested in the flesh in the person of Jesus (I Timothy 3:16).

A Chinese man once said to a preacher, "You speak well, but why do you dwell on Jesus Christ? Let him alone and tell us about God." The preacher replied, "What sir, would we know about God if it were not for Jesus Christ who is the express image of the Father (Hebrews 1:3)."

## What Life Is All About

Johnny Ramsey

There are many precious things about Christianity that would not be available if the Savior had not left heaven and graced this earth with His presence! How empty and meaningless our daily existence would be apart from the richness and depth of the gospel era. We owe so very much to the resplendent beauty of New Testament Christianity. Whatever the world offers in its most glorious moment fades into nothingness when the radiant hues of the Messiah beam forth. For years faithful children of God have sung:

"Take the world but give me Jesus,

All its joys are but a name;  
But His love abideth ever,  
Through eternal years the

same."

Mankind struggles in vain to find genuine purpose in life apart from Christ. When the Lord and heaven's message enter our thinking we are transformed from a dreary pursuit of merely existing to an exciting motivation and goal. Following our blessed Redeemer provides a destiny where God "will make all things new" (Revelation 21:1-5).

"Beyond the sunset's radiant glow,

There is a brighter world I know,

Beyond the sunset I may spend

Delightful days that never end."

Let us notice several key points that Jesus contributes to our sojourn upon the earth

(I Peter 2:11) of which we would otherwise be bereft had He not come.

1. All Spiritual Blessings - Ephesians 1:3

2. The New And Living Way - Hebrews 10:20

3. Our Perfect Example - Hebrews 4:15

4. Sin Clearly Defined - John 15:22

5. Salvation Absolutely - Hebrews 7:25

6. Satan Defeated - John 12:31-33

7. Heaven Accessible - Hebrews 6:18-20

8. Sinners Made Saints - I Timothy 1:15

9. God's Grace In Us - I Corinthians 15:10

10. Someone Who Never Leaves Us - Hebrews 13:5-6

When we weave all of this  
Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

People from the White House and Capitol Hill are tenaciously holding to the idea that universal health care coverage *must* be universal.

Let me suggest however, that just because you offer care universally doesn't mean everyone will take advantage.

We've learned that from Jesus and Christianity. His care is universal. He said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned (Mark 16:16). Titus 2:11 says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men . . ."

But, just as you can't make people go to the doctor, Jesus isn't going to make us obey His Gospel. He just offers. The responsibility to follow Him is our responsibility.

## What Life Is All About

Continued From Page 3  
into one fabric of truth we realize that we surely do have "life more abundantly" as the Master taught in John 10:10. The Psalmist makes a tremendous contribution to this

line of thought in the cogent words of Psalms 124:

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side . . . Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." Living with, for and in Christ

Jesus is truly what life is all about. How vain would the struggles be if our Savior had not come.

Two centuries ago Thomas Gray wrote of folk with "obscure destiny in the short and

simple annals of the poor." Millions live and die that way -- outside of the Savior -- without hope in this world or the one to come (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Christians should praise God every single day for purpose,

depth, richness and meaning in lives that bask in the sunlight found in the shadow of the Cross!

## Be A Doer! James 1:23-25

Continued From Page 2  
natural face in a glass:

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.

The kind of doer, or servant, we would all like to be is described in Verse 25 -- one who is "blessed in his deed." So, what formula is given for this blessing in service? How can we truly be fulfilled as we work to glorify God?

### Behold

The prerequisite to the whole process of becoming a successful "doer of the work" is "beholding." We must behold our spiritual faces in the mirror of God's Word. Beholding involves the development of an abiding, everyday, all-day-long interest in the Scriptures. Finding time for Bible study is often our most basic obstacle in becoming successful servants. Our lives are filled with complexities that seem to confront us daily at tremendous speed. This complicated, fast-paced lifestyle sometimes becomes a time barrier, and we deny ourselves the much-needed strength that comes only from His Word. Days begun with Bible study are far less complicated. A Bible study notebook on the kitchen counter, in the car, or at the office for jotting down questions or observations for further study is most helpful. A frequent reading of Psalm 119 will increase a desire for Bible study. Bible verses on the refrigerator, desk, mirror or window are constant reminders of God's presence in our lives. Family devotionals serve to keep Him in the center of daily living. Reading good, Scripture-filled publications, keeping a file of Bible topics, and simply meditating on the Scriptures as we go about our tasks are all ways of filling our hearts with God's Word. Tape players are invaluable tools for hearing Scripture, lessons or hymns as we drive, jog or do housework. Sending a gift or greeting card with a Scripture enclosed will be encouraging to both the sender and the recipient. Many of those frustrating

moments we all spend somewhere waiting each day can be golden opportunities for Scripture memorization. God's Word is never more apparent to the world about us than when it is hidden in our hearts (Psalm 119:11).

### Believe

After beholding ourselves in the mirror of God's Word, we must then believe in its power. Faith is always a prerequisite of any physical act that we do to please God. A conviction that God's Word is a complete rule of action for true freedom (perfect law of liberty, Verse 25) gives assurance of its power as we reach out with it to those around us.

Before we invite our friends over to discuss spiritual matters, we must be convinced that the Bible is the only hope for lost men and women. Before we walk across the street with a dish in one hand and a tract in the other, we have to know that the Bread of Life is the answer for dying souls. Most assuredly, before we ever stand before a Bible class, we must be sure that the Scriptures have all the answers to all the questions that truly matter. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that God's Word is quick, powerful, sharp, piercing and discerning. We must be convinced of the power in our hands before we can effectively reach out to someone else.

Belief in the invincibility of God's Word is crucial to the woman who would reach others for Him. But we all still fail in our mission if we are not courageous enough to share the Word with others. Confidence in ourselves as His children is also a necessary part of the formula for successful service. We are all familiar with Paul's assertion in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Yet, all too often we lack the confidence and initiative to put our talents to work for God. Perhaps the fear of criticism or failure becomes an obstacle. Comparing ourselves with others can inhibit the best of our good intentions. The opportunity passes by while we say, "Let her do it. She'll do a better job."

True self esteem is found in Christ. The reality that God bought us at Calvary makes us valuable. Our standards are higher than the world's

standards. Our mission is infinitely more important than any earthly calling. We must feel worthy, because of the blood, of this great mission.

Regular prayer and Bible study are directly related to a healthy self esteem for the Christian woman. Offering encouragement to others is a certain way to become encouraged. Sometimes just defying our fear and forcing ourselves to accomplish that small but intimidating feat can work wonders in overcoming our self doubts. Of course, our foundation for building a healthy self esteem must always be an open and blameless relationship with God. We can never find peace and assurance in ourselves until we have found it with the Father.

### Become

Having beheld the mirror of God's Word and believing its ability, we are equipped with the knowledge and confidence we need to become what we want to be for God. We are ready to become "doers of the Word."

The bottom line question for all of us is, "How can I be most effective in reaching other lives with the gospel?" or "How can I be blessed in my deeds" (vs. 25)? The word "do" is in the New Testament over 1500 times. New Testament Christianity is all about doing. It is in fact, the actual operation of faith that makes it alive (James 2:17).

Christians must, then have a zest for doing. God's people must view each opportunity enthusiastically. The original word for "enthusiasm" meant "God in us." Those of us who truly have God in us should exhibit a spirit of eagerness as we face the daily challenges of faithful living.

Enthusiastic intentions are the makings of great beginnings in service to God. But all too often opportunities hasten past us while we're still intending. As in all aspects of our lives, so in our Christian service, we must have an organized plan of action. School, office, or neighborhood projects are successfully completed only because they are prioritized and placed on an agenda with a due date written beside them. So it must be with the deeds we have, with the most noble motives, purposed to do in God's service. How many truly great intentions have been thwarted by the devil's simple

ploy of procrastination?

Organization takes many forms, but always consists of elimination and concentration; prioritizing so that immediate, but less important affairs do not take precedence over the really significant matters in life. Once the important goals have been identified, definite steps toward achieving them should be devised and charted on an agenda.

For many Christian women, a small notebook with dividers for several sections has been an invaluable organization tool. Though each person's notebook becomes a very personal and unique volume all her own, these suggestions might be helpful to someone who is beginning a service notebook.

First, be sure to include a goals section. Take inventory and begin with a list of lifetime goals. These are broad accomplishments that are truly important to you. Then include a list of concrete plans -- things you will do this year to work toward those lifetime goals. Be sure to leave lots of space for lists of weekly and daily plans as you work for the things that really matter to you. Reread this goals section at least monthly for focus and clarity in your daily living.

Next, include a prayer section. Listing prayer requests helps us to pray with purpose and builds faith as prayers are answered.

A personal Bible study section becomes a valuable resource file. Jot down Bible truths, passages or outlines as you prepare for Bible studies, or as you study alone. If you are a Bible class teacher, make memos here of passages or illustrations that will be useful in class.

Use one section for class and sermon notes. The main purpose for this (although it can be a great resource for study) is just to help you retain more of the material that is taught in the classes and worship services that you attend. Maximize every study opportunity!

Last, include a section for miscellaneous lists, bills, budget information, schedules -- whatever you need in ready reference. Include somewhere a calendar for pacing yourself as you become a doer.

If you take the time to develop a personal notebook, by all means carry it with you. You

will be surprised how valuable time in a waiting room, on a coffee break, or at the bus stop can be when you have your notebook and New Testament along.

Now, with enthusiasm and organization, let's go next door! It is a researched fact that by personal networking one person can contact anyone in the world by processing only 10 other people; less in most cases. In other words, I can relay a message to anyone, anywhere by way of ten or less people. To the Christian, that says that although radio, television, the printed page and Bible classes are all useful tools, they are not the primary way we evangelize the world. The light of the world finds its greatest illumination as one candle lights another. It is as simple and as profound as "this little light of mine -- I'm going to let it shine." Evangelism is enthusiastically living for Christ every day and taking every opportunity to reflect Him to those with whom we have contact. The light of the world in Matthew 5:14-16 is reflected light. If our candle is too dim to reflect in the window across the street, our neighbors may never know the true light. Matthew 5 goes on to tell us that the first glimpse of light that they see is our good works. It's what we do that turns their hearts heavenward to glorify our Father.

As we work to put our lights on a candlestick, we must look introspectively. James 4:17 (KJV) links opportunity with obligation as it says, "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." We must then consider our situation in life. We must ask ourselves, "What circumstances do I encounter in my daily living in which souls could be touched with the Word of God?" "What doors are ajar for me if I will go inside with God's Will?"

As we face the challenges of opportunity, let us respond by beholding ourselves in the mirror of God's Word, believing in its power and in ourselves as His messengers, and by becoming all that we can be as doers of the work.

--203 Wildwood Dr., Jasper, AL 35501.

July 15, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- "Sound Doctrine"
- Sin Is Still Sin!
- Joshua Was A Leader
- "How Can You Say That. . . ?"
- I Want To Be There
- "Most Of A Minute"
- "Repentance Before Faith?"

Volume 30 Number 29  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

1e

## The Perfect Example

**K. V. McAlpin**

Christ came to earth for a purpose. This purpose was to fulfill prophecy and to redeem us from our sins (Matthew 1:21; I Timothy 1:15). While Christ was on the earth, he left "us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). The word leaving in this verse is literally "leaving behind" (Psalms 85:13; Matthew 10:38; 16:24; John 13:15; I John 2:6). Man needs God. Jeremiah emphasized this in chapter 10:23, which states: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The deepest desire of every Christian should be to walk in the steps of Jesus. Let us study the perfect example of Christ in the context of I Peter 2:21-25. In so doing we will see the necessity of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

**The example of the life of Christ.** "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:21-23). The word ye in verse 21 is in reference to the servants in verse 18. Peter's use of the word also puts the sufferings of these slaves on a new level. They find comfort in knowing that someone else went through a comparable experience; that of suffering unjustly. Not only had someone suffered, but it was Christ who suffered like things (II Timothy 3:12; I Peter 3:18; 4:1; Matthew 5:10).

The word example means actually "writing under." Weust states, "It is used of words given children to copy, both as a writing exercise and as a means of impressing a moral. Sometimes it was used with reference to the act of tracing over written letters."

In verse 22 the word did in the Greek text speaks of the fact of sin (II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; I John 3:5). Alford translates, "Who never in a single instance committed sin." The Greek word for guile speaks of craftiness or trickery. The

word found speaks of a failure to find something after careful scrutiny. No guile could be found in the words of our Lord, despite the fact that his enemies sought diligently and searched carefully (John 1:47; Revelation 14:5).

Commenting on verse 23, Calvin defines the Greek word translated reviled, as follows: "It is a harsher railing, which not only rebukes a man but also sharply bites him, and stamps him with open contumely. It is to wound a man with an accursed sting" (Psalms 38:12-14; Matthew 5:11; Luke 22:64, 65; 23:9; John 19:8, 9; Matthew 26:62, 63; Mark 15:29-32). The Greek words suffered and threatened denote that it was a continuous suffering; however, this suffering did not elicit any retaliation from Christ (Hebrews 12:2, 3). He "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (Psalms 37:5; II Timothy 1:12; Luke 23:46; Acts 17:31).

**The example of the love of Christ.** "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being

dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24). The Greek word translated tree does not refer to a literal tree, but to the cross. This verse shows us the love Christ has for us. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:13, 14). Notice the description of the love that Christ had: "Greater love hath no man . . ." The Lord not only died in our behalf; he also died in our stead (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; I Timothy 2:6). "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2).

**The example of the leadership of Christ.** "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Peter 2:25). Christ is a shepherd (pastor) in that he

feeds, guides, and protects his sheep (Psalms 119:176; Matthew 9:36; John 10:1-16; Hebrews 13:20). Peter also refers to Christ as the chief shepherd (I Peter 5:4). He is a bishop (overseer) because he superintends, supervises, and directs their activity. He is the bishop of the souls of Christians in the sense that he is the overseer of their spiritual welfare (I Timothy 2:5, 6).

In this study of First Peter 2:21-25, we have seen that Christ left us an example of his life, his love, and his leadership. Let us strive to follow the example of his life, as we endeavor to conform ourselves to Christ. Let us also strive to emulate his love exemplified throughout his life. Alas, as we labor to follow the impeccable example of Christ's life and love, let us never forget that Christ is our sole authority in all things. "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18, ASV).

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## Original Sin

**Johnny Ramsey**

There have been those who teach that we are born in sin and thus cannot help the propensity toward evil-doing. We shall carefully examine

this erroneous matter in just a moment but first let us document such false doctrine as to its source.

John Wesley, founder of Methodism went on record in

Original Sin, page 340, as teaching: "We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse ere we know what it is." In Wesley's Sermons, Volume II, Page

266 we quote: "In Adam all died. The natural consequence of this is that every one descended from him comes into this world spiritually dead, dead to God,

wholly dead in sin, entirely void of the image of God, and of all righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Every man now  
Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon  
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## "Sound Doctrine"

*Editor's Note: This fine article was written twenty three years ago by the late Gus Nichols. Considering the current matters before the church today. I believe this message is as fresh as the morning paper!*

Gus Nichols

Webster says doctrine is, "Teaching" and "Instruction," and "That which is taught," or a "principle, or body of principles . . . tenet, dogma; principle of faith." Are not these things important? If so, doctrine is important. To say we do not need any doctrinal sermons, is to say we do not need any religious "teaching" or "instruction," or "principles of faith."

### DOCTRINE AND DESTINY

God has chosen no other way to convert and save man, than through teaching and doctrine. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). While this divine plan may not suit modern sophisticated man, and may appear to him "foolishness," it has pleased God to save by this means. The same passage says "The world by wisdom knew not God." Man has always vainly thought he knew more than God. Satan argued this to Adam and Eve, and converted them away from God and his word (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19). To pervert the gospel of Christ is to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-10).

The parting message of Jesus was, "TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). To teach people to observe the commandments of Jesus is doctrine, and it is important. Paul said, "Speak thou the things which become, (or befit) **SOUND DOCTRINE**" (Titus 2:1).

Jesus preached doctrine in his first sermon, and the record says the people "were astonished at his doctrine" (Matthew 7:28). To kindly and plainly preach the same "doctrine" now will astonish many! It is new and as fresh as a morning rose. It fits into man's needs, as the air fits his lungs, water his thirst, and food his hunger. There is a little room in our hearts that can never be fully satisfied with anything less than God,

and Christ, true religion and the doctrine which is according to godliness. Just as the bird longs for its mate, and man and woman long for each other, so man need God.

### CONTINUED IN DOCTRINE

The Jerusalem Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). How shocking would it be if one of the apostles had tried to get rid of doctrine from their services -- if one had said, "Don't teach us first principles, but study all the week to make entertaining speeches."

Instead of spurning doctrine, the Jerusalem church emphasized doctrine. The rulers said, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with **YOUR DOCTRINE**" (Acts 5:28). These priests did not like doctrinal preaching.

### ABIDE IN DOCTRINE

The religious world in the main has departed from the doctrine of Christ. The doctrine, or gospel of Christ, produced the "Churches of Christ" that you read about in the New Testament (Romans 16:16). Perverted doctrine produces denominations. Not one of them could survive one week if they were to return unto the doctrine of Christ in all matters of faith and revelation. Christ said people should know his doctrine (John 7:17). He wants all men to abide in his doctrine, and never grow weary in hearing, teaching and practicing it.

John says "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deed" (II John 9:11). No man on earth can honestly read these verses and then say doctrine is not important. Paul told Timothy to charge some to "Teach no other doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3).

### DOCTRINE AND UNITY

The doctrine of Christ promotes unity and peace, whereas, false doctrine causes divisions and sin. Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren,

Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-19). Please note that the doctrine delivered unto these people by the apostles could be clearly understood. One could be positively certain that he knew this doctrine. Otherwise, if it could not be learned and understood, how would the church know to "Mark" and "Avoid" these false teachers? If the doctrine had been so mysterious and indefinite, so uncertain and complex, that ordinary men could not understand it, how would these Christians know but that they themselves should **BE MARKED AND AVOIDED**?

One man said, we should not be certain and positive about what we believe and teach, for after all we do not know we are right. He reproved us for being so "Cocksure" and "conceited" as to think we are right and everybody else wrong. He argued that we should fellowship the denominational people and join them in their worship and teaching services. He said we are the most sectarian sect in the nation, and all because I argued that the Bible can be understood, and that we can know the truth, and know that we know it! Please read Romans 16:17-18 again, and see if we can, (or cannot), understand "The doctrine" which they had "learned" and if we can so understand it as to be sure of its truth, that we can "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine learned, and avoid them." Could they know who "Causes divisions and offences among them?" Could they be so sure they were right, that they could safely "Mark" and "Avoid" the false teachers? Could they know who was "Contrary to the doctrine" which they had learned?

And, if the doctrine is so foggy that it is "Neither white nor black," and that we can't know we "are saved" until the judgment, how can we examine ourselves and prove our ourselves as to whether or not we "Are in the faith?" (II

Corinthians 13:5).

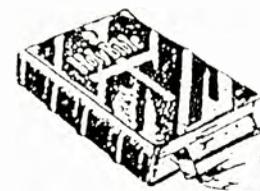
Luke wrote that we might "Know the certainty" of those things, wherein they were instructed (Luke 1:3-4). How could the elders be on guard against false teachers, if they couldn't know who they were, and that they themselves were not the false teachers? (Acts 20:17, 28:32). And if we can't know whether or not we are right, why did John write, "That ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I John 5:13). And how can we know that we have God and Christ unless we can know the doctrine and that we are abiding in it? (II John 9:11).

After a first and second admonition, how can we reject a man who is an heretic, if we can't understand the doctrine (Titus 3:10-11).

But these compromisers tell us that we are not to judge. Well, we are to judge in the light of truth. "**JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE, BUT JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT**" (John 7:24). We are commanded to judge those within, and put away the wicked from our fellowship (I Corinthians 5:9-13). We are commanded to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the word of God (II Thessalonians 3:6). According to the compromisers, we might turn out to be the ones to be withdrawn from. What good is the Bible if we cannot know until the judgment what it really teaches? (Psalm 119:105); (Ephesians 6:10-20). Yes, doctrine is so important that we must believe and

follow the right doctrine. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7-13). Brethren, let us not slow up, let down, lag, nor fag in the preaching and practice of the full and complete doctrine of Christ (II John 9:11). This will purify the church, convert the honest of heart, and promote that oneness for which Jesus prayed. This oneness is to be had upon the basis of the doctrine of Christ. I am glad to know that we have thousands who will preach the truth regardless of the consequences, and we need thousands more.

The Bible is just as interesting as life and death, happiness and success, character and destiny. The scriptures are as fresh as an early morning, or a new born baby. True, it is an old Book, but the most important things in life are old things. We do not need a new Sun, moon and stars. The Sun of Adam's day is good enough for intelligent people. We do not need some kind of new air to breathe. The kind Adam breathed is good enough for me! The same earth Adam lived upon is a great challenge to me! Plain food, sleep and hard work are nothing new, but thousands of years ahead of date. We do not need a new kind of rain and water for our streams and to slake our thirst! Neither do we need the Bible and its doctrine replaced with pretty little speeches and lectures of human wisdom. "Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:1-3).



## The Words Of Truth

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# Sin Is Still Sin!

**M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.**

Isn't it strange that in the eyes of society, what was a sin ten years ago is now acceptable behavior? Isn't it sad that our nation has so easily turned from the principles and standards that made it great to accept things that, for decades, have been abhorred?

What has caused this change in the hearts and consciences of mankind? The fact is that if we call sin by name it often has the same effect -- it still turns your stomach. So, society has changed its name. What used to be called "drunkenness" is now called a "sickness." What used to be called "modesty" is now called

"prudishness." What used to be called "sexual perversion" is now called an "alternate lifestyle." What used to be called a "sweet little baby" in the mother's womb is now called a "fetus." What we must realize is that, no matter what we call it, sin is still sin.

Shakespeare said, "A rose by any other name smells as sweet." I say, "Sin by any other name stinks as rotten" (Romans 6:23; James 1:12-15; Psalm 51:1-2). Because sin is still a threat to our spiritual and physical lives, we must warn people about its effects. Let us notice three:

**I. Sin disintegrates.** Sin will destroy our life. It can and does cause us to lose all that we have. Jesus said, "For

what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Sin is a spiritual illness that eats away all that is good. Christ is the "Great Physician" who came to "heal" and to "save." We are told by the Master of the rich farmer who stored up his wealth and lost it all, including his soul, because of sin (Luke 12:13-21). Satan is a destroyer (I Corinthians 10:10), and all that he promotes disintegrates that which is good.

**II. Sin captivates.** Sin is slavery; thus the sinner is enslaved. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Paul wrote, "Know ye

not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Romans 6:16). Once sin has begun destroying our life, it will enslave us to it. We lie to cover up our sin, and thus have sinned again. We shift blame for our own failures and thus continue in sin. We resent others for exposing our sins, and thus we are slaves to sin. Sin captivates.

**III. Sin separates.** "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). The fact that Christ came seeking the lost proves that man was and is away from God without

Him. He is alienated by his sins, separated from the Father. The three parables of Luke 15, the lost sheep, lost coin and lost boy, express in part that man is away from God. After sin has begun to disintegrate the good in our lives, it will captivate and hold us enslaved to it, the final result being eternal separation from God.

No matter how we refer to sin, it is still there. Satan is still seeking those whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). Sin by any other name is still sin.

--1705 Starview Drive, Salem, VA 24153.

## Joshua Was A Leader

**Bobby Key**

The destiny of a nation is bound up in its leaders. This is no less true of the church. Very seldom can a congregation rise above its leadership. Men by nature follow the examples of those about them. Relatively few think for themselves or decide, rationally, on their course of conduct. For the most part we all like to play "follow the leader." This should be a sobering thought for those who stand in the place of divine leadership.

Joshua, who in earlier years was the servant and minister of Moses, led the people across the Jordan into the promised land. It was Joshua, supreme head and leader of the people, who read God's law from Mount Ebal. There was never any doubt as to

where this Godly man stood. He called on the people to make a choice that would determine their destiny and the destiny of their children's children. They had but two alternatives: Serve Jehovah God or serve the idolatrous gods. Joshua's example inspires us all: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old." At this point his life was ended but not his influence. We are not surprised to read from Judges two: "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua . . ." No greater tribute could be paid Joshua than this. His

faithful life of devotion and service to God led an entire nation in the right direction. Not only did he influence the people for good during his life but during the days of the elders that outlived him. He was dead, but his works continued to live on (Revelation 14:13).

It would be impossible to overstress the importance of Godly leaders. If those who speak for God fail to be steadfast in doctrine and moral purity, what may God expect of the people in general? Joshua, God's servant, lived the way he preached.

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

## "How Can You Say That . . . ?"

**Mike Benson**

How can you say that faith only is insufficient to save when the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . . ." (Acts 16:31)? You need to rethink your teaching . . . "

This is a good question.

May I answer it with a few Biblical illustrations? Note:

Case study #1: The children of Israel - Read Numbers 21:4-9. Questions: Were those people who were bitten by the fiery serpents "saved" by faith only, or were they saved when their faith led

them to look at the bronze serpent Moses had fashioned? Suppose someone had said, "I believe," but did not look. Would he have lived? What does the Bible say? "So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; Continued On Page 4

### I Want To Be There

Heaven is a place of blissful joy with pure delight--  
A place of beauty and eternal day, with no night.  
No pain or sorrow, no death nor tears or care.  
As I think of this, O HOW I LONG TO BE THERE!

Heaven is a place, free from toil and care---  
In my labors and anxieties, how I long to be there.  
I want to see the God who saved me by his grace,  
I want to praise him and look upon his face.

I want to be with the God who SO loved me--  
And gave his only Son to die on that cruel tree,  
I want to go to heaven for it is free from sin  
I long to go to be with my heavenly Father then.

I want to be with the saints and faithful of all ages,  
Where temptation, sin and heartache never rages.  
I want to see the Christ who died in my stead  
I want to be with him who came forth from the dead.

I long for the communion with Jesus Christ my Lord  
That is eternally intimate, according to the Word.  
Where love reigns and there's happiness to share---  
When I consider heaven, I WANT TO BE THERE!

--J. A. Thornton, 3-19-83

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

We often hear religious leaders talk of how they desire unity among all churches. That's a great dream, but it hasn't happened. Jesus prayed for unity in John 17, and that His disciples would be one as He and His Father are one. So, what's the problem? Simply stated, it's differences regarding the authority and relevance of the Bible. You see, most religions today study and follow their particular creed book along with the Bible. Therein lies the rub. If we unite into one, whose creed would we follow?

There's only one way it could work and be right. All the creeds of men would have to be forever pushed aside, leaving only the Bible. That's all. God's word. In fact, that's what God wants. II Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished to every good work."

## Original Sin

Continued From Page 1  
bears the image of the devil in sensual appetites and desires."

In the book, What Lutherans Believe by W. E. Schramm, on page 65 we read: "Ever since the fall of Adam all men who are naturally begotten are conceived and born in sin." This naturally comports with the Augsbury Confession of Faith, Article Two: "All men are born with sin. This vice of origin brings eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost."

Dr. W. A. Jarrell, noted Baptist, in Gospel In Water, stated: "That man is totally depraved is evident from his being a child of the devil,

fathered by the devil and of the same moral nature."

The Catholic position is made quite clear by B. L. Conway in Question Box, page 253: "Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses from original sin."

All of these quotations crumble in the light of Ecclesiastes 7:29 and 12:7. God made man upright and God gave the spirit of man. How could a perfect Creator be the author of sin?

The word sin comes from the Greek word "Hamartia," which means "to miss the mark." The Bible variously defines sin as:

- (1) A failure to do the things that are right (James 4:17).
- (2) A transgression of God's

law (I John 3:4).

(3) All unrighteousness (I John 5:17).

(4) A violation of one's personal relationship with God (Romans 14:23).

From this scriptural definition of sin we realize that the doctrine that teaches "infants are born in sin" is totally false. **"ADAMIC SIN" IS NOT TAUGHT IN BIBLE:**

At least six out of ten religions teach that a baby is born in sin. This doctrine is known variously as: original sin, total depravity or the Adamic sin. The Bible does not teach such a doctrine, but millions blindly believe it. This is why an unscriptural practice - infant baptism -

exists. Men started with a false assumption and added a practice unknown to the Holy Word. If we can prove that infants are born pure, sinless and safe before God, then the rite of sprinkling babies will certainly be proved false. The two ideas go together. If a baby is ushered into life in sin, then something must be done to remit that sin or the infant is lost. John Calvin said: "There are some infants in hell not a span long." Why did he think so? Because he taught that babies enter this world as sinners and if they die prior to being sprinkled they will be lost! Here are some scriptures that forever prove we are not ushered into life as sinners:

(1) "Thou wast perfect in all thy ways, from the day thou wast created until iniquity was found in thy heart" (Ezekiel 28:15).

(2) "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezekiel 18:20).

(3) We are "the offspring of God" and He is "the Father of our spirits" (Hebrews 12:9 and Acts 17:29). How then could we be born in sin?

(4) "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God." Little children evidently are not sinners or Jesus would not tell us to be like them (Matthew 18:3).

## "How Can You Say That . . . ?"

Continued From Page 3  
and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Numbers 21:9). Study also John 3:14, 15.

Case study #2: Naaman - Read II Kings 5:1-14. Questions: Was Naaman cleansed of his leprosy through faith only, or was he cleansed when his faith led him to dip in the Jordan. Would he have been cleansed? What does the

Bible say? "So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II Kings 5:14).

Case study #3: The Ethiopian eunuch - Read Acts 8:26-39. Questions: Was the Ethiopian saved from his sins at the point of faith only, or was he forgiven when his faith led him to confession

and baptism? What does the Bible say? "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and

he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39). Why did the eunuch go away rejoicing? Because 1) he had been taught, 2) he believed, 3) his faith led him to obedience, and 4) obedience brought salvation.

The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. The writer of

Hebrews wrote, "By faith Abel OFFERED . . ." (Hebrews 11:4). "By faith Noah . . . PREPARED . . ." (Hebrews 11:7). "By faith Abraham OBEYED . . ." (Hebrews 11:8). You are correct - faith is essential to salvation, but it must be followed by obedience in order to be pleasing to God.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## "Repentance Before Faith?"

**Mike Benson**

Dear Mike,

"Does repentance come before faith?"

Let's let the Bible settle your question. Please note:

1. The Bible teaches that there is joy in heaven over a sinner who repents, ". . . There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10), but it also says that without faith it is impossible to please God, "But without faith it is

impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Consider: If repentance comes before faith, then the angels in heaven (Luke 15:7) rejoice over someone with whom God is yet displeased.

2. The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. "The men of Nineveh will rise in the

judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah . . ." (Matthew 12:41).

Consider: How could the men of Nineveh repent at Jonah's preaching before they believed what he preached?

3. The demons believed in God. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and tremble" (James 2:19)!

Consider: If repentance comes before faith, it follows that the demons had repented.

The Bible order is 1) belief, then 2) repentance. After Peter preached the gospel (i.e., the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), he told those who "were cut to the heart" (i.e., "believers") to "repent . . . and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins . . ."

(Acts 2:38).

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

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July 22, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Jesus: Total Authority
- What Is The Church?
- What About Baptism?
- That There Be No Schism
  - "Most Of A Minute"
  - Daniel
  - Meek Or Weak?
- A Clear Conscience

Volume 30 Number 30  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

the

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 1)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In a short series of articles, I wish to study with you, our appreciated readers of Words Of Truth, one of the great passages of Holy Writ -- John 3:16. Perhaps this verse has been memorized more than any other verses, of its length, in the entire Bible. In somewhat of a larger context it reads,

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:14-17).

### STATELY TRIBUTES

Many marvelous tributes have been laid at the feet of this precious passage of Sacred Scripture. It has been called, "The Golden Text Of The Bible." The passage is eminently worthy of this beautiful designation. It would be difficult indeed to find another verse that would equal it in setting forth in few words what the general gist of the Bible inculcates.

It has been called "The Little Bible" or "The Bible in Miniature." This duet of designations is quite fitting because John 3:16 is somewhat like a capsule of basic Bible teaching. It is an exciting epitome of the Scheme of Human Redemption as devised by Deity and executed by the coming of Christ and Christianity to our mundane

sphere.

The countless sermons preached on this text constitute a stately tribute to its literary greatness. That many people consider it as their favorite text of Holy Scripture is another tribute of its exquisite beauty, breadth and brevity. Brother Gus Nichols, founding father of this weekly publication, was fond of preaching many sermons with this as his foundational text.

### ATROCIOUS ABUSES

In the face of the marvelous, majestic tributes that have been placed at the feet of John 3:16 have come also some serious, inexcusable abuses of this declaration of Sacred Scripture. Some have concluded that John 3:16 is all the Bible we need. This is a serious abuse of any passage. It falls into the same category of the person who says that the only portion of the Bible necessary is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 or perhaps just the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12. People make this same egregious error when they contend that all we need are the red letter sayings -- the actual statements made by the Lord Jesus. The truth of the matter is that we need ALL the Bible. We are not amenable to all of it but we need all of it. Scriptures of the Old Testament have been preserved for our learning, comfort and admonition as per Romans 15:4. We need every sermon found in the Bible -- not just the Sermon on the Mount. We need every one of the 31,102 verses found between the opening syllable of Genesis 1:1 and the final syllable of Revelation 22:21. All the

hundreds of chapters and thousands of verses which come before John 3:16 are needed. Verses prior to and subsequent to John 3:16 help to magnify and beautify John 3:16. They mirror its marvel, majesty and magnificence. Deity wrote the Bible in such marvelous manner that ALL its varied parts are essential. No part of the Bible is superfluous matter; no part of it is deficient. It is a serious abuse of this passage to affirm that it is the only portion of the Bible that is needed. Had that been the case this would have been the only portion of the Bible the Spirit of Inspiration would have penned and that Deity would have preserved. Of that we can be certain. The rest would have been omitted. But it was not omitted. Therefore, what was included was absolutely needed.

Some have looked at John 3:16 and concluded that the employment of the verb believeth makes this a "faith only" passage of Scripture. Very quickly and decisively they will eliminate everything from the gospel plan of salvation except a simple profession of intellectual assent to the Deity of Christ. To their surface way of thinking (???) there is no room for anything else save this type of "faith only" passage in the New Testament offering salvation at this point and this point exclusive of all other imposed stipulations. "Faith only" occurs but once in the New Testament and there the writer of Inspiration says that one is not saved by it void of all other commandments. James wrote in James 2:24, "Ye see then

how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY" (Emphasis supplied). There is no contradiction between James 2:24 and John 3:16. John did not teach salvation by faith only in John 3:16 and James 2:24.

Closely akin to this is the fabled idea that John 3:16 kills passages which demand gospel works of obedience in order for salvation to be attained. We can quote a passage like Mark 16:16 which states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" and the one who opposes this type of teaching will say, "Oh, but I know a Scripture which kills Mark 16:16." When asked what, the person will say, "John 3:16." They will give the same response if Acts 2:38 is quoted which demands of the alien sinner that he repent and be baptized for (unto) the remission of sins. Again, the same response will occur if a passage like Acts 22:16 is given which demands baptism in order that the sins of the guilty may be washed away. Basically, the same response will be given toward passages like Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:27 and I Peter 3:21. Now where did people receive the idea that one Scripture kills, negates or nullifies another Scripture? Surely, they did not receive such from God and His Holy Book. John 3:16 is a part of the New Testament; so is Mark 16:16; so is Acts 2:38; so is Acts 22:16; so are Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:27 and I Peter 3:21. There is not as much as a tiny particle of disharmony between John 3:16 and any of the foregoing

passages which demand works for salvation to be attained. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ made a birthright promise of the Spirit of Truth for each one who enters the kingdom (John 3:16). Only eleven verses separate John 3:5 from John 3:16 when John came to write this marvelous chapter. Surely, the Lord did not demand baptism, which is what the birth of water means, and then contradict Himself with a promise in John 3:16 that faith only is all that is essential. There is nothing but beautiful harmony between John 3:5 and John 3:16. Trouble emerges when men reject John 3:5 and abuse John 3:16. Passages of Scripture which demand of the alien sinner that he repent, confess and be baptized for the remission of his sins are not killed, negated or nullified by John 3:16.

Other surface students of John 3:16 feel it is a haven of Scripture which will pretty well support every kind of religious practice and person. A real, thorough understanding of John 3:16 will not allow anyone to rest underneath its shade who has gone soft on truth and is condoning errors of various kinds. The truth of the matter is that there is NO other verse in all the Bible which refutes more errors than does John 3:16. I shall more than adequately support this proposition with positive proof before these articles on John 3:16 stand concluded. You will plan to study with me this section of Scripture in the next installment, won't you?

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

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Jesus: Total Authority

Glenn Colley

The church, in many parts of our country, is in a time of crisis. Some of our preachers and youth directors are considering themselves "agents of change." They seek fresh approaches to the work and worship of the church. Some claim to only change things within the realm of opinion. In that realm people *should* have liberty. We've preached that for decades. There is however, a serious caution to be heeded here: When one sets his sights on changing the thinking and practices of the church he will have to possess a strong appreciation for, and sense of, the authority of Christ and the Bible. For without that deep respect for authority, the "agent of change" will soon cross the line away from the God-approved and into transgression. We're seeing this today in the leaders of this divisive movement. With their new found "freedoms" they are waxing worse and worse. They are crossing the line with regard to things like denominationalism, an unscriptural concept of grace, false teaching concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage, instrumental music in worship, and expanding the role of women in worship without regard for I Timothy 2:7-14, and the list goes on.

Just how much should people respect the

authority of Christ? How seriously should we take the question of authority with regard to our worship, the organization of the church, and our daily lives? The answer is, among other places, in Colossians 3:17:

"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."

Note please the comprehensive nature of this verse. The inspired writer is painting with a very broad brush.

1. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all ..."

How much of life is left after this? That's what Paul is obviously intending to teach. What he is about to write applies to ALL of life, and to all of our activities.

2. "... In the name of the Lord Jesus ..."

Authority. It is solid, understood, and settled. We who follow Christ carry His banner by wearing the name "Christian." It is not us who live, but Christ who lives in us (Galatians 2:20). Whatever we consider doing in word or deed, we first must make sure it is within the boundaries of Christ's will. For only within those boundaries, (learned in the revelation that God has given to man through Christ, Hebrews 1:1, 2, John 12:48), are we doing our words or deeds in His name.

Do we revere the authority of Christ? To do, as Paul wrote, *everything* in word or deed in the name of Christ, embraces the totality of our lives, in worship and out of worship. We seek His authority with regard to our personal convictions, our family life and activity, and in our assemblies with other Christians to pay homage to the Lord our God.

Brethren, respect for authority is ultimately the key issue facing our churches and these so-called "agents for change." During the 1970's, Rubel Shelly, who is today a kingpin in the divisive change movement, said the truth when preaching on the use of instrumental music in worship.

He said back then, "What's really at stake with regard to pianos and organs is the authority of the Bible. Once that point can be made clearly and effectively, it is an easy thing to lead that person to accept the truth about baptism, the unity of the church, or any number of other fundamental matters that are a part of one's coming to the saving truth of the Gospel" (Words of Truth Lectures; Jasper, AL, 1978).

Elders and preachers must not give up "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

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## What Is The Church?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,  
"What is the church?"

This is an important question. Please consider the following:

1. According to the Scriptures, Saul of Tarsus admitted that he had persecuted THE CHURCH. "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church" (I Corinthians 15:9).

2. Whereas the Biblical record also points out that Saul persecuted MEN AND WOMEN. "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3).

3. Therefore, when we read about the church, we are reading about PEOPLE.

"Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (or those who were being saved) (Acts 2:47).

But what kind of people?

•Those who have been saved (Acts 2:47).

•Those who have been made alive (I Peter 2:3).

•Those who have been purchased with the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28).

•Those who have been made free from sin (Romans 6:17-18).

•Those who have been reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:14-16).

•Those who are in Christ (I Corinthians 2:1-2).

Are you a member of Christ's church?

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

**A man has happiness  
in the palm of his  
hands if he can fill his  
days with real work and his  
nights with real rest.**



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# What About Baptism?

**W. A. Holley**

Many of our readers may think that baptism is a very complicated subject. In fact, it would be if we failed to "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). To make "scrambled eggs" of the Bible is to become more and more confused.

The Bible teaches that there is more than one baptism. What are these baptisms? We shall point them out: (1) "Baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:1-2); (2) John's baptism (Matthew 3:1, 11); (3) Baptism of suffering, (Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39); (4) Baptism of the Holy Spirit, (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-48; 11:14-15); (5) and the baptism of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). This baptism is to continue to the end of the world.

For a period of time Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism coexisted, but by A.D. 64, when Paul wrote the Ephesian Letter Holy Spirit baptism had ceased. How can

we know? Because Paul mentioned "one baptism" . . . the baptism that was to last unto the end of the world, thus showing that Holy Spirit baptism had ended.

What was the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism? Holy Spirit baptism was given the twelve apostles that they might teach the people how to be saved under the New Testament (John 14:26; 16:7-8). Joel 2:28-32 was fulfilled on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:16-21). There have been only two instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the history of the world: One on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-4), and the other at the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48; 11:14-15). What was the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism at the home of Cornelius? It was to convince the Jews that the Gentiles also had a right to become Christians, children of God (Acts 11:14-17).

Living today, there are thousands of people who claim Holy Ghost baptism,

but they cannot demonstrate its miraculous power (I Corinthians 2:4). Throughout a long ministry I have challenged those who claim to have been baptized in the Holy Ghost to heal me -- but they have not . . . cannot . . . usually end up getting angry because I wanted proof of their claim. Why? Paul demonstrated his supernatural power. Why cannot they?

What does Bible baptism require? It requires water (Matthew 3:11). It requires "much water" (John 3:23). It requires "going down into the water and coming up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39). Bible baptism of the Great Commission requires a "burial" and a "resurrection" (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-4). This baptism cannot be sprinkling or pouring (Leviticus 14:15-16). We suggest that the words "pour" and "sprinkle" and "dip" be properly considered.

Why should a responsible person be baptized? We shall answer according to your Bible:

One should be baptized

because Jesus Christ commanded one to be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20). One should be baptized because he believes what Jesus said. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Babies cannot believe and do not need to be baptized. They are not born sinners. They become responsible to God when they reach the age of liability for their own transgressions (Ezekiel 18:20; 28:15; Romans 4:15; I John 3:4). Those who repent of their sins should be baptized (Acts 2:36-38). Those who wish to be baptized must confess the name of Jesus (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10).

One should be baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Salvation is IN Christ, but one is baptized into Christ (II Timothy 2:10; Romans 6:3). The "new Creature" is in Christ, but one is baptized into Christ (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-27). Whether one likes it or not,

"baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:20-21). We urge our readers not to be stubborn, but yield to the Lord's commands.

Who should be baptized? To answer as simply as possible, only those who believe, repent, confess Jesus' name should be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33).

Hence, infants and others who are incapable of knowing right from wrong should not be baptized. The doctrine of hereditary total depravity is not taught in your Bible. These are safe, thus going on to heaven when they die (II Samuel 12:22-23; Job 7:7-10). What mother can believe that her dead baby was a "little devil?" Enough said.

We humbly and sincerely urge all our readers to believe and obey the truth of God, and to do it today.

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

## That There Be No Schism

**Bobby Key**

The Lord deplores schism in the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:25). It is still good and pleasant when brethren dwell together in unity and harmony (Psalm 133:1). Too many times the unbeliever turns away from the church in disgust because of warring factions, devilish divisions, and bitter envying and strife within the body for which Christ died. Under the guise of saving the church, some have gloried in the number of splits they have caused. One brother said, "I have divided three churches because they all needed dividing!"

Too often a preacher -- who has been commissioned by the Lord to preach the gospel of peace -- is right in the middle of the wrangling. The

preacher may feel it is his duty to take charge of things. Finally the elders decide they must be the overseers. The preacher calls a few of his close friends and followers and the schism begins. Petitions are circulated to remove the elders, and appoint new ones favorable to the preacher. The results are always the same -- a divided church.

The preacher pleads his innocence. After all, he was just saving the church. It has always been hard for me to see how splitting the church could save it! After all, it doesn't take many brains to lead a faction of weak and disgruntled members, and every congregation has its share of this sort.

I am beginning to hear more and more talk of majority rule

in the church. One recently said, "We have a democratic form of government, why can't we have the same for the church?" There is a very good reason why not! The church is the kingdom of God! Christ is the absolute king and monarch; He has ordained that elders be appointed over each local church to oversee the flock. Justice is seldom done when the majority rule. The majority cannot decide by petitions and voting what is right and wrong, what is truth and error. The Lord decided that a long time ago.

Watch any man who is always trying to unseat the elders. A few have gone so far as to say that elders ceased with the apostles, and that there is no such thing as an elder in the church today.

If the office of elder was to cease, why were their qualifications given by Paul to Timothy and Titus? Certainly elders have authority to act in their God-given role of leadership. Can you imagine an office without authority or a law without an enforcer or penalty?

Wise elders will wake up, assume their rightful place, and keep the hirelings, wolves, false teachers, and troublemakers from stealing God's sheep. God holds them responsible.

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

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

You who know me know that I don't believe in chain rattling, women scaring, moaning, haunting, Alfred Hitchcock-style ghosts. I do however believe what the Bible says in Hebrews 11:4 -- speaking of Abel, the writer observes, "He being dead yet speaketh."

It's true, you know. After we're dead and gone we will continue to speak in the sense that people will remember how we lived, our convictions (or lack of convictions), our hopes and our dreams.

Gus Johnson was 47 years old and dying of brain cancer. He reflected on his years of stardom with the Washington Bullets and Philadelphia Seventy-Sixers and said, "I want them to remember the way I played." He further stated in a newspaper interview that his greatest fear was that he would die and his daughters would not "even know what their daddy did."

If you find it painful to consider how you will be remembered, then begin today doing what you can to change it! Become a faithful New Testament Christian today and be remembered as someone who made life more than a waste.

## Daniel

### Johnny Ramsey

Daniel was a wonderful servant of God because he had a Spirit of Prayerfulness. This is powerfully manifested in chapter two as the prophet unveils the mysterious and forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Before interpreting the dream Daniel first praises the name of the Father.

Daniel was such a prayerful man that his enemies could frame a sinful plot based upon his predictable righteousness! In the sixth chapter we read of some

jealous men who desired the death of Daniel. They knew the prophet of God was one who daily offered up prayers to the throne of Jehovah. They trapped the Persian ruler into signing an immutable decree which condemned Daniel's practice. Immediately upon learning of the decree, Daniel, turned toward Jerusalem to commune with God in prayer! Question: Is our devotion to the Lord so consistent and loyal that those who observe us can predict our obedience? This

is indeed a challenging lesson from the book of Daniel.

Daniel, the hero of our story, was also a Fearless Preacher. What would the history of Israel have been, without bold preachers such as Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel? God has always used valiant men of dedication to shape and mold the thinking of nations. In Daniel, chapter four, the prophet had the unpleasant task of telling the King of Babylon that his rulership was coming to an abrupt and distasteful end. Yet, like Paul

before Felix (Acts 24:25), Daniel fearlessly proclaimed the untarnished truth to Nebuchadnezzar. In chapter five of this exciting treatise we find the fascinating story of "the handwriting on the wall." Belshazzar prepared a great feast which turned into a revelling, sensual orgy. The precious vessels which had been plundered from the Jerusalem Temple were used in Belshazzar's banquet. The entire scene was one of reckless abandon and godlessness. But the king was startled to see the fingers of a

man's hand writing on the plastered wall near the candlestick. The writing troubled Belshazzar. He called for the astrologers and the sooth-sayers. But none could interpret the strange message. Finally, Daniel was brought into the presence of the Chaldean ruler. Without hesitation or apology the man of God plainly informed the King that: "Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting."

## Meek Or Weak?

### Allen Webster

The world believes that an aggressive and self-assertive person will get ahead. Many (if not most) live with the philosophies that you "have to look out for number one," "every man for himself," and "it's a dog-eat-dog world." They see a meek man as one who has no backbone, who gets run over, who never gets angry, who never takes a

stand and never gets in anyone's way (a sort of Pee-Week Herman or Marvin Milquetoast).

This is not how the Bible uses "meekness." The word *gentleness* [*praotes* translated *meekness* in Galatians 5:23] in the New Testament has three main meanings. (1) *Submission to the will of God* (Matthew 5:5; 11:29; 21:5). (2) *Teachable*, the man

who is not too proud to learn (James 1:21). (3) Most often it means *considerate* (I Corinthians 4:21; II Corinthians 10:1; Ephesians 4:2) (Barclay).

Aristotle defined *praotes* as the mean between excessive anger and excessive angerlessness, as the quality of the man who is always angry at the right time and never at the wrong time.

Moses was the "meekest man of the earth" (Numbers 12:3), yet, he was a strong leader. Who would accuse Christ of being weak, yet He is described as "meek and lowly of heart" (Matthew 11:29; cf. Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 21:4, 5)?

Meekness is "strength grown tender," as a weight lifter handling a baby. It is used of a great stallion who

has been tamed to where he is gentle with children. The word is used in secular Greek of Socrates when he drank hemlock for "corrupting the minds of the young."

How does a meek person act?

A MEEK MAN ACTS IN SUBMISSION.

## A Clear Conscience

### Scotty Sparks

It was a fake. A hoax. A deliberately planned deception. It was a lie. For almost 60 years, Christian Spurling lived with that lie, but he never could quite put it to rest. His conscience weighed too heavy on his soul. Finally, just before his death at age 90 last November, Spurling admitted the hoax that had tortured him for two thirds of his life: "the purported Loch Ness monster pictured in a famous

1934 photo was just a toy submarine fitted with a fake sea serpent head" (Times Daily, World news clip). I'm sure you've all seen the picture of the monster's body protruding out of the water of the famous Scotland lake. It was all a fake. Spurling was the last surviving member of four conspirators who planned and instigated the whole deception. Spurling even built the model himself.

Confession is good for the soul. For 60 years, Christian

Spurling lived a lie. I'm sure he found a certain peace of mind just before his death, but it's tragic that he waited so long. James 5:16 says "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed."

Are you carrying around something that has been bothering you for weeks, maybe even years? It could be that you wronged someone. Maybe you lied or deceived someone to cover

up some wrong. Perhaps you talked harshly to somebody because they caught you at a bad moment, but you've never apologized. Included in the message of James 5:16 is the confession of faults when we have wronged our brethren in a personal way. The formula for cleansing your conscience is so simple. Confess the problem to the appropriate person, ask and pray for forgiveness, and you'll be healed. The use of the word "healed" is

significant because a nagging conscience over a matter that needs to be cleared up with someone hurts worse than almost any disease. I think this is so because it robs you of your peace of mind.

Do you need to clear something up with someone to ease your conscience? Don't carry it around 60 years like Christian Spurling. Make things right today. You'll feel a lot better.

--Florence, AL.

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**See Inside Articles:**

- Instrumental Music And The Silence Argument
- The Exclusive Group
- Soul-Winning In The Untoward Circumstances Of Philippi
- Under His Wings
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 30 Number 31  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

e

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 2)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

The apostle of love wrote in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the initial article I noted some of the tremendous tributes that have been given toward this precious passage of Scripture. Then note was made of the many abuses that ignorant and irreverent men have made of this marvelous message.

### STATELY SUPERLATIVES

John 3:16 overflows with such. Its majestic message is filled with kingly terms, with key words of the Bible. It shall be my purpose in this second article to note some of these kingly words, these key terms.

The Bible contains 3,566,480 letters and 773,746 words. No combination of letters is more important in the Bible than the three letters G-O-D. When these letters are linked they form the greatest word in the Bible -- God. He is the greatest being in all the Bible. It has been suggested that the word "Jehovah" occurs 6,855 times in the Bible and Inspiration used Lord 1,853 times. The second word in John 3:16 is God. The human mind can fathom no being greater than God. We are reminded of how the Bible begins, "In the beginning God created the

heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). We are reminded of how Moses addressed Him in Psalm 90:1, 2,

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Looking backward He is from everlasting; looking forward He is everlasting. He is all-powerful, all-wise, all-present, all-benevolent and all-merciful. He is the greatest of all beings because of His role in creation, providence and the Scheme of Human Redemption. Truly, He is the incomparable Being. God can refer to each member of The Timeless Trinity. In John 3:16 the reference is to the Father.

John 3:16 informs us that God SO LOVED. So is an adverb and describes the marvelous manner of His love. This is the greatest emotion in all the world. Paul paid tribute to the supremacy of charity or love in I Corinthians 13. He suggested in verse 8 of this wonderful chapter that charity or love "never faileth." He concludes the chapter by saying, "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love (I Corinthians 13:13 -- ASV). Before the world existed Jehovah God loved His fellow members of

the Godhead Three (John 17:24). He loved the Word; He loved the Holy Spirit. Can there be love without an object? If so, how? It would be highly interesting to have those who hold to the theory that there is but one person in the Godhead tell us whom this one person loved before there were created beings to love! God's love is just as eternal as is His existence. God's love toward fallen humanity is eloquently enunciated in Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

John 3:16 informs us that God so loved the WORLD. This was not just the world that existed when the Babe of Bethlehem made His advent to our mundane sphere and first pillowed His precious head in the manger of this small Judean village. Jehovah God was deeply concerned with the myriads of men who had lived before the coming of the Messiah; He was deeply cognizant of the multiplied billions that would live subsequent to Bethlehem and Calvary. This is the greatest conceivable number that the human mind can fathom. God did not love just a few among the many. He loved the world. The whole sea of humanity that had lived, that lived in the first century and all the ones that would live in future times was before Jehovah God

when He sent Jesus to seek and save the lost (John 3:17; Luke 19:10). It has always been difficult for men to realize the beautiful breadth of God's love in this respect. Man has been prone to love the few people among the many and sometimes not that MANY! More often than not we tend to love the lovely and not the unlovely among mankind. So wedded to this concept is mankind that major religious leaders have built up fanciful theories to the effect that Christ died only for the few -- the lovely elect -- not for the unlovely non-elect. But the whole world of helpless humanity lay upon the great heart of Gracious Jehovah when He sent the Eternal Word, His only begotten Son, into the world of woe. There is no way that you and I can really fathom God's love for the whole world. We can believe it and be glad therein.

John 3:16 informs us that God gave His only begotten Son. Incidentally, only begotten is the accurate translation of monogenes -- Greek term for only begotten regardless of what so many of the new Bibles say on this term and toward which numerous of our hedging brethren have begun to teach! God's only begotten Son is the greatest gift He could confer. All earth's gold, silver, diamonds and other precious metals are His but He gave us something more precious

than all these in the aggregate. The cattle upon a thousand hills belong to Him and yet He gave us something more valuable than these. He gave us the Marvelous Monogenes -- His Only begotten Son. He did not send a Gabriel or a Michael; He did not send an unnamed angel from amidst the myriads of Heaven's created beings of might and marvel. He sent the darling object of His eternal affections -- His Son. Even Paul, by Inspiration, could not fully fathom the great gift of Jesus. Hence, he simply and superbly penned the statement, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15). Everything we can speak about the glory, honor and wonderful worth of Jesus Christ fails to exhaust His true treasure to us. Remember He is the unspeakable gift, the One who cannot be comprehensively described. Could He be, He would be a SPEAKABLE gift.

John 3:16 informs us that we are believers IN HIM. As clearly stated in the initial article, this is not "faith only" -- a popular but very poisonous piece of Protestant propaganda. This is a comprehensive faith that moves us to obey fully the divine will. This, in reality, is the greatest of all faiths we can have. All men have faith to some degree. Even infidels have faith. They have faith in

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Instrumental Music And The Silence Argument

Glenn Colley

The decision in the churches of Christ to not use instrumental music in our worship is simply the application of an important principle. If you want to understand the restoration movement and the modern participants, you must have a clear handle on this principle.

Christians are people whose actions in their lives are based on the authority of the Lord. Period. Since Christ is their Lord and Master, they look to Him for authority with regard to family, employment, child rearing, recreation, worship, and all the other facets of life. Colossians 3:17 makes this principle clear: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..."

Note how comprehensive that command is. "Whatsoever . . . do all" encompasses the totality of our lives. For all that we do as Christians we should have the full assurance that our actions are approved by God. Romans 14:23 says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 10:17 tells us the origin of true faith: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

There is no direct command in the New Testament for using instrumental music. There is no implication contained in the scripture to authorize its use. There is no rule of expediency that can possibly justify the use of pianos and organs in the worship of God. The New Testament authority is for singing, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16. From these verses we are authorized to teach, admonish, and speak in our singing. These are actions obviously done by verbal communicating. These are intelligible sounds from the heart. These cannot be done instrumentally.

often made in support of instrumental music in worship is called the "silence argument." Simply stated, this argument affirms that while it's true that God didn't authorize the use of instrumental music in our New Testament worship, neither did He *prohibit* its use. Therefore, it is argued, that since God did not specifically say not to use instrumental music in worship, it is permissible.

History shows this to be a dangerous argument. Saul offered unauthorized worship at Gilgal (I Samuel 13:11), and the Lord took his kingdom away from him. King Uzziah offered worship in the Temple, which only the priests were authorized to offer, and he was stricken with leprosy (II Chronicles 26). Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized fire in the censers (Leviticus 10:1), and lost their lives. The text says, "They offered strange fire, which He commanded them not." In each of these three tragic instances, the Lord had not specifically prohibited the action which got them into trouble! He had simply specified the right way for the act to be carried out, or the right person to perform the act, and that was enough to eliminate all other possible people and elements in the worship.

But we did not invent this authority principle with regard to the silence of the scriptures just to justify our position on instrumental music. Consider Hebrews 7:12-14:

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood."

The writer of Hebrews maintains that Christ cannot be a priest unless the law has been changed. He knows that some, who know the old law, will raise the issue of Christ's Jewish tribe, Judah. Jesus is not of the right tribe under the Law of Moses to be a priest. The priestly tribe is Levi, descendants of Aaron. The Hebrew writer says we have a priest about whom the law says nothing. If the Old Law was still binding, Jesus couldn't be our priest! Why? Does the Old Law specifically forbid a man from Judah to be a priest? No, not in those words. But the Jews knew that they were bound to that which was authorized. What the Law did say was specific. The priests were to come from Levi, and from the sons of Aaron. The Law of Moses therefore eliminated all of the other tribes in this matter. It didn't have to name all the rest with a "thou shalt not." It simply designated one tribe, and because of the authority principle all other tribes were eliminated.

Thus the people to whom the Hebrew writer first wrote understood that they couldn't keep the Old Law and keep Christ as their high priest. The Old Law didn't permit that. Only the New Law would support His priesthood.

Our decision to use only vocal music in our worship is not simply a matter of taste or of a contentious spirit. We are simply endeavoring to "walk by faith, and not by sight . . . (II Corinthians 5:7)." To do that, we must do only those things in our worship which are authorized. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

## The Exclusive Group

Bobby Key

The invitation reads, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;" however, not many take the invitation seriously and accept the Lord's offer. As in ages past so it is today that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Most of us are not willing for Christ to have undisputed possession over our lives. "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). Even though God wants everybody to be saved and has sent an invitation to convey this very message, most of the world will not come unto him that they might have life (John 5:40).

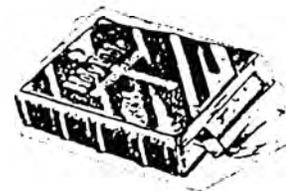
The Straight and Narrow road scares us. We prefer the wide gate and the broad road because so many more people travel there. Americans like to run with the crowds. We had rather be called almost anything on earth than narrow. Let's face it, the church of the Bible was exclusive. It could have easily let down its bars and taken in all sorts of religiously minded people, but it didn't. Not only was the New Testament church intolerant, narrow, exclusive, it was repellent as well. Instead of attracting everybody, it repelled some.

After the house cleaning, when Ananias and Sapphira were abruptly excluded from the fellowship of the church, great fear came upon all the

church. "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them" (Acts 5:1-14). People didn't become Christians in those days because it was the nice thing to do; they didn't become church members carelessly. Men and women with honest hearts knew it meant something to unite with those Christians. There is little about the average church to make men stand back in reverence today. You can be a church member now and live like the world. We are always trying to attract through games, prizes, picnics and pulpit. The New Testament church didn't cater to the world, but it rather repelled the world! Christians actually surrendered all.

In the days of Gideon, God sent home twenty-two thousand cowards, "fearful and afraid." I wonder if the proportion is not about the same now. Some think they are fighting the good fight of faith when they attend an hour on Sunday morning and put a little money in the collection plate. Every Christian has volunteered to serve in the Lord's army and nobody ever expects to retire. The Christian life is to be lived seven days a week, in the field, the office, the campus, at work or play, whether young or old, sick or well, rich or poor. There is never a time or place to give up.

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



### The Words Of Truth

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## Soul-Winning In The Untoward Circumstances Of Philippi

Neal Pollard

From Acts 16:16-40, we gain insight into the conditions facing the early Christians in their efforts to evangelize their world. The events unfolded in these verses came on the heels of favorable circumstances. The church was growing (5), churches were being established (6, It was during this time that the congregations were started in Galatia, to whom Paul would later write the book of Galatians), souls were being won (13-15) (Lydia and her household), and lasting Christian friendships were being formed (15, the hospitality of Lydia toward Paul and fellowlaborers). Though their personal fortunes were about to change, Paul and Silas were still determined to reach out to souls in trying situations. We see many things from this text.

**An Unwanted Commendation (16-18).** At the place of prayer, a group of missionaries that included at least Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy were confronted with an unusual circumstance. The situation amounted to the devil preaching Christ. Observe the circumstances more closely.

The person who made the commendation of God's character was "a certain damsel." She was likely a young slave or maid. Such a person seems harmless and innocent (and she might otherwise have been), but she had a problem which

complicated her life.

The problem with her glowing commendation was that she was "possessed with a spirit of divination." What was in this girl was an evil spirit. The spirit's intention was to convert people to idolatry. Such a commendation did more harm than good (cf. I Corinthians 10:20) because the spirit held God in contempt. That this girl was possessed with an evil spirit was problem enough. However, what this spirit, through her voice, tried to do was an even larger problem. It caused the girl to follow Paul and the other Christians around proclaiming the source of their faith and power.

The proclamation the damsel made was, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." The "spirit of divination" was telling the truth, but in an attempt to destroy the influence of Christ instead of promote it. In calling Paul and his fellowlaborers servants of the Most High God, this spirit wanted to give the residents of Philippi the impression that this Most High God was on the same idea as the devil. Thus, this confession of God's name was an attempt to destroy Christ. The proclamation was an irritation to Paul and the other Christian laborers.

The profitters from the damsel's misfortune were "Her masters," who received "much gain by" her

"soothsaying." So, not everyone was irritated by the damsel's continual ranting. These men had an investment in this girl, and her supernatural ability provided them with "much gain."

The purging of the spirit from the girl was done by Paul. "But Paul . . . said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." It seems that Paul, knowing the girls' masters' rightfully owned her, tolerated her behavior as long as he could. But, after "many days," Paul cast the spirit out of her to protect the reputation of God.

Notice some of the lessons we learn from verses sixteen through eighteen. First, it is possible to do right for the wrong reason (as the spirit's confession proves). Second, there are always those who profit from sin (but, their gain is brief). Next, even the devil admits the reality of God's plan of salvation and God as the means of salvation. Finally, the devil will go to ANY length to undermine Christ. Paul's casting the demon out of the damsel provided the springboard for some unfavorable circumstances which followed.

**An Untrue Complaint (19-21).** In relieving the maiden of the spirit of divination, Paul made another group very wroth. As the text reveals, the girl's masters made their living off of the "freak show" she provided. They sought revenge for what they perceived as thievery.

The angered masters made the untrue complaint. They had lost the gain they had built upon the damsel's misfortune. So they caught and charged Paul and Silas. They concealed the true reason for their anger because they knew the people of the city would likely sympathize with the restored girl rather than with a group of greedy men who lost a source of income. They also concealed the true reason for their anger because if they told the truth, the people would believe and follow the men they wanted punished. Thus, they emphasized the fact that Paul and his fellow workers were Jews, whom the people, being Roman, naturally hated (McGarvey's Commentary, 206-207).

The amoral magistrates listened to the untrue complaint. Paul and Silas, caught by the girl's masters, were taken before a very biased group of rulers. There seems to have been no justice done in this "trial." These magistrates appear to have been easily swayed by popular opinion (22-23).

Notice some of the lessons to be learned from verses nineteen through twenty-one. We learn that when one's worship to his God is jeopardized, it provokes his strongest emotions. Also, we learn that to defend a sinful practice, man will deflect the blame from himself and onto others. Too, we see that when a country, state, or local government has an imbalanced sense of morals

or lack of morals, then justice and righteousness often cease to be relevant.

**An Unraveled Crowd (22-24).** Passionately, the damsel's masters built their "case" against Paul and Silas. Evidently, the people believed everything they said against God's preachers. The crowd quickly became a lynch mob clamoring for the punishment of two innocent men. In so doing, the multitude was guilty of several sins.

They were guilty of blind allegiance. After hearing only one side of the story (and that from a group of avaricious men), they blindly accepted a lie. They were guilty of relying entirely on their emotions. The damsel's masters understood that, by playing on the crowd's nationalistic loyalty to Rome, they could stir up the people against Paul and Silas. They were guilty of having a twisted sense of morals. They honored the word of these masters and punished the servants of God. They closely resembled those rebuked by Isaiah. The prophet, speaking to delinquent men, wrote, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

Notice some of the lessons we learn from verses twenty-two through twenty-four. First, majority opinion is not usually a safe and reliable guide. Jesus wrote, "Enter ye  
Continued On Page 4

## Under His Wings

Johnny Ramsey

Moses made it very clear that faithful children of God abide in the sheltering arms of Jehovah. Even when adversity surrounds us we can rest assured that the eternal God is our refuge (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 46:1). Such divine provision brings sunshine to a dreary day and a drab existence. Peace can be ours regardless

of a life-style otherwise filled with frenzy, rebellion and misery.

"Under His wings, O what precious enjoyment

There will I hide till life's trials are over

Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me

Resting in Jesus, I am safe evermore."

In the lion's den Daniel trusted in the Creator for help

and deliverance (Psalms 70:5). Joseph, all alone in a heathen land, depended upon God to see him through (Genesis 50:20). Jesus, in deep sorrow in Gethsemane, could not get assistance from three friends (Matthew 26:41) but the Father above strengthened Him. And, in our hours of trial, we are blessed to cast our cares upon  
Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

When would you think you could see the farthest? In the daytime, or in the darkness at midnight? Wait before you answer; remember that the magnificent stars, some of which are larger than the earth, can only be seen at night.

That's how life is sometimes. The dark days, filled with tragedy, heartache and pain are days we would all rather do without. There is one sense, however, in which those days are good for us. They force us to look to the future instead of dwelling only on the present. We would be dreadfully shortsighted if we always had to live in prosperity and never face adversity.

The Apostle Paul was in prison for his preaching of Jesus when he wrote: ". . . forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God is Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13).

Let's use those dark days to plan for the future.

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 2)

Continued From Page 1  
the non-existence of God and the non-divine origin of the Bible. We have faith in family, friends, fellow-workers, business associates, etc. But by far, the greatest person in whom we have faith is Jesus our Lord. He will never betray us. He will never let us down. Men can; men do; the Lord NEVER will.

John 3:16 presents the greatest tragedy that man can

avert. This is the tragedy of perishing, viz., being lost in Eternal Gehenna. What would you term the greatest tragedy that could strike you? Many would answer the loss of health, a loved one, a job, a child's affection and loyalty, betrayal by one's best friend, sexual infidelity by one's marital mate, one's house gone up in flames, etc. These, without exception, are all tragedies but none of them equates with the loss of one's

soul. Jesus touched this momentous matter in Matthew 16:26 by the queries, so powerful and penetrating, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

John 3:16 presents the greatest reward -- eternal or everlasting life -- life in all its rich fullness minus end. If someone were to deposit a

million dollars in your checking account, tax-free, that would be a great gift of benevolent grace but would not be comparable to your receiving eternal life in yonder's world. You could not write a check on that account guaranteeing heaven for you in yonder's world. You could not take any of this million dollars with you. There are no pockets in shrouds; no U-Hauls follow the hearse to the silent city of

the dead! An exceedingly wealthy man in our country died some years back. Someone inquired, "Wonder how much he left behind?" The respondent answered astutely, "He left it all!" Only what we do for the Lord follows us beyond death and to judgment.

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

## Soul-Winning In The Untoward Circumstances Of Philippi

Continued From Page 3  
in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that 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). Also, we see that just as truth without emotion is fatal, so is emotion without truth. To please God, we must accept both equally. This applies both to worship specifically (John 4:24) and life generally (John 12:48).

**An Unlikely Convert (25-40).** The meat of the story is contained in these last sixteen verses. We see progression in the life of a man who comes in contact with Christ through the taught word. The dramatic change brought by a knowledge of that word is one of many emphatic

testimonies of scripture that the word must change a man and that man is never at liberty to alter the word of God (cf. Romans 12:1-2). We come to learn that souls can be won even when it seems that conditions are not conducive to church growth.

When we first meet the Philippian jailer, he is a CARETAKER OF THE PRISON (23-26). Nothing is said of the jailer at the time of Paul and Silas' imprisonment. He followed the orders of the magistrates and was given responsibility for their safe keeping. His occupation called for him to guard with his life all prisoners in his charge. The penalty, under the Roman law, for letting a prisoner escape, was death (McGarvey, 208). The Philippian jailer could not be bothered by a diversion of any kind.

After the power of God caused all prison doors to open and all prisoners' fetters to fall, the jailer thinks himself to be a CRIMINAL IN THE PRISON (27-28). Fearing that prisoners were escaping easily under the cover of darkness, he esteemed himself a doomed man. Therefore, he draws his sword to commit suicide and, in his thinking, preserve a small amount of his dignity and honor. However, Paul tells him all prisoners were still there.

At this point, the jailer became a CONTACT IN THE PRISON for Paul and Silas (29-31). Though these circumstances were highly unusual, Paul and Silas did what all Christians should do in their lives. They took advantage of an opportunity to teach Christ to someone who needed Him. When he

asked them what he must do to be saved, the jailer was told to "believe on the Lord Jesus . . ." Obviously this was not all he needed to do because Paul and Silas had not yet told him and his household anything about Christ or His plan of salvation. He was undoubtedly instructed, like the Pentecostians, Lydia, and even Paul, to turn from sin to God, confess Jesus as Lord, and be baptized in order to have the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30; 8:37; 22:16).

The text reveals that the jailer obeyed God's saving plan to become a CONVERT FROM THE PRISON of sin (33). He and his household, having heard the will of God, were baptized "straightway." "Straightway" means "at once." According to Acts 16:33, no one in the jailer's

household went to bed that "night" without being baptized! True conversion involves baptism for the remission of sins.

One has to wonder what was on the mind of the jailer when he went to work that night. No one will question his state of mind at the conclusion of the night. He "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (34). The unlikely became reality for God's glory. Paul and Silas, amid their own suffering, hardship, and injustice, reached out to the lost around them. What an enduring principle this should teach Christians in a world which can, at times, seem overwhelmingly sinful. When God's children turn their focus outward to reaching the lost instead of counting their own losses, souls are won to the glory of God.

## Under His Wings

Continued From Page 3  
the One who will never forsake us (I Peter 5:7).

In the hour of trial,  
Jesus plead for me,  
Lest by base denial  
I depart from Thee . . .

On the darkest night and in the loneliest place we know our heavenly Father knows and cares and will provide the comfort and consolation we so desperately need (Philippians 4:11, 13, 19).

Recently, in a gospel meeting, a young mother who had been deserted by her husband, came to worship with a heavy heart and a troubled soul. She came before the congregation with tender words of courage reflected in the following statement: "I have been tempted

and tried in numerous ways over the past few months -- especially the past few weeks. I have said and done things I should not have. I have had feelings that were wrong. I need forgiveness as well as your prayers for strength. I need strength to stand up for what is right. I need strength to get on with my life and to keep my focus on the right course. I need to be a better Christian example for others and for my children."

This sister in the Lord longed for Christians to walk closely with her in moments of need and compassion. More than that she sought the touch of the Savior to bear the heavy burdens pouring into her life. Jesus has promised, long ago, to be with

us to the end of the gospel age (Matthew 28:20).

Christ will me His aid afford  
Never to fall, never to fall  
While I find my precious Lord  
Sweeter than all; sweeter than all!

We see things differently and from a new perspective when we walk hand in hand with our Redeemer. Old things fade away and new vistas of beauty and richness come to bless our lives and warm our souls. Isaiah 26:3 brightly cheers us:

"He will keep you in perfect peace  
if your mind is fixed on Him."

James tells us that when God comes to our assistance He does so generously without grudging. When we head back home from

the pig pen of sin the Creator runs to meet us (Luke 15). We cannot expect such treatment from most people in the world. Someone has well-stated:

The guy who says he will meet you  
half-way is invariably a terrible  
judge of distance.

But, our Savior goes beyond the call of duty. Ephesians 3:20 informs us that He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly and even above all that we ask or think! Every good gift flows from heaven's bountiful hand (James 1:17).

O, Thou fount of every blessing  
Tune our hearts to sing Thy  
grace

Streams of mercy never ceasing  
Fill my heart with joy and

praise . . .

Is it not a marvelous matter that the very One who made the world still knows and cares about our troubles and woes -- and tempers every wind that blows. Longfellow brilliantly wrote these words:

Be still, sad heart, and cease  
repining;

Behind the clouds is the sun  
still shining.

Daniel 2:28 proclaims these  
majestic words to cheer us:

There is a God in heaven  
May we avail ourselves of such  
a glorious Friend and lean upon  
His everlasting arms and ever  
abide under His wings!

August 5, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Fasting
- Influence
- Closet Christianity
- The Pilgrim View
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Matthew 12:40 --  
Three Days And  
Three Nights

Volume 30 Number 32  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

1e

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 3)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

*Editor's Note: If you need copies of the first two articles by brother Taylor, let me know and I will send them free of charge. -- 1501 6th Ave., Jasper, AL 35501.*

God's Book states in John 3:14-17,

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

In this short series we are making a concentrated examination into the various facets of verse sixteen of this interesting, intriguing context. Previous articles have stressed the tributes that have been paid this verse, abuses made in its regard and some of the kingly words of its colorful composition.

### STATELY

### COMPREHENSIVES

This current article will accentuate the comprehensive import of this amazing verse of Sacred Scripture. It is both amazing and astonishing how much is packed into this short verse of Holy Writ -- twenty-five words in both the KJV and the ASV. I shall be noting its comprehensive import by

dividing the verse into five expressions. They will be numbered and noted.

(1) "For God so loved the world." Does this refer to just one isolated attitude or one peculiar motive that Jehovah God sustained toward man or does it cover the entire range of Deity's attitudes and motives toward the solving of the sin problem and the heavenly redemption of sinful man? Clearly, the latter is our instant response. God's love included far more than one isolated act. It included everything that was needful for the formation of that plan in His infinite mind which would lead to the salvation, both earthly and heavenly, or his fallen creatures on earth. We think everyone will agree that this expression breathes the very spirit of vast comprehension on God's part.

(2) "That he gave his only begotten Son" is the second expression. Does this refer to one isolated act on God's part or to the whole scope of Deity's plan for one of its own number to take on humanity and make an atonement for the sins of fallen man? Clearly, the latter is our instant response. The sending of His Son involved the promises and prophecies of Old Testament Scriptures. It involved the work of preparation as seen in Patriarchal and Mosaic Covenants respectively. It involved all the types and shadows with which the Old

Testament abounds. It involved the birth and mission of John the Baptist. It involved the virgin birth, the silent period of His growth and development in insignificant Nazareth, the personal ministry, the mighty miracles, the atonement on Calvary, the death, the burial, the triumphant resurrection, the ascension, the establishment of the kingdom or the church, His being seated in regal authority on David's throne throughout the Christian Age and the ultimate conclusion of Biblical Finals -- second coming, resurrection of the dead, final judgement and the eternal destinies of heaven and hell. Again, I think no one will debate the vast comprehension of this expression in John 3:16.

(3) "That whosoever believeth in him" is mentioned in sequence but I prefer to reserve any discussion of it till near the end of this current article.

(4) "Should no perish" comes in for the next literary emphasis. Does this refer to just one isolated act or does it comprehend everything involved in our avoiding hell? Clearly, the latter is the proper response. It involves not being lost at the point of physical death. It involves not being raised to the resurrection of damnation at the Lord's second advent. It involves not being placed on His left hand in that day of

days. It involves not hearing Him say "Depart" in that day of final reckoning. It involves escaping that place that is filled with outer darkness, reeks with the filth of the ages, is populated by the most heinous of people and is characterized by the weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. To avoid any and all of these we must live a life of loyalty to Him. We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; we must live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age. Will anyone deny the comprehensive import of this fourth expression of John 3:16? Surely not!

(5) "But have everlasting life" is the final expression of John 3:16. Does this refer to just one isolated act or does it comprehend beautifully everything connected with the heavenly hereafter and its attainment? Clearly, the latter is my immediate response. Surely, it will be yours also. It involves our dying in the Lord or in the faith. It involves being raised to the resurrection of life. It involves being placed on His right hand in the day of final reckoning. It involves hearing Him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father" as per Matthew 25:34. It involves the rest, glory, honor, felicity and eternal fellowship in that land beyond the bright blue. But all of this comes only to the good and faithful servant as per Matthew 25:21, 23. It

comes only to those prepared to meet the Lord when He comes again. Surely, none will deny comprehension here.

Number three now returns for our careful consideration. It reads "That whosoever believeth in him." This fortunate individual will avoid perishing and will one day enjoy everlasting life. Does this expression mean just one isolated act or does it refer to all that the person has to do to avoid hell and attain heaven in yonder's world? Clearly, the latter is my confident, reinforced response. Yet most of the religious world is ready to say, "Why yes, that is exactly what it means -- just one isolated act of forming intellectual assent to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." And presto one is saved and cannot ever lose it regardless of future conduct. Salvation is made cheap by such a fallacy! But does "believeth" here mean just faith only as most religionists have glibly concluded? A thousand times NO! "Believeth" here is of deep import. It is a vastly comprehensive term. It refers to all the believer does from an initial hearing of truth until his dying breath as a faithful saint. That it means far more than simple faith

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Fasting

Glenn Colley

Consider the forgotten practice of fasting. How much do you know about it? Do you know any one who does it? Have you ever heard a lesson taught on the subject?

The examples of those who fasted in the Old Testament are many, and impressive. Moses fasted, Exodus 34:28. All Israel gathered together at Mizpeh and fasted, I Samuel 7:6. The Bible says of Elijah, "And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that mean forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (I Kings 19:8). While Ezra mourned the sins of the people he fasted, Ezra 10:6. Daniel fasted, Daniel 10:3.

New Testament references to fasting are available, but are reserved to the Gospels and Acts. Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and while there He fasted, Luke 4:1, 2. When Saul was blind and waiting the Lord's will he was "three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9). The leaders in the church at Antioch were fasting when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The next verse says, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2, 3). Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted when ordaining elders in every church, Acts 14:23.

After Acts 14:23 the Bible is silent on the subject

of fasting. While before this reference we read of "prayer and fasting" linked together, after this reference we read of prayer and no mention of fasting. Did they fast? Probably so, but the Holy Spirit saw fit to leave off any mention, discussion, or command with regard to fasting.

When Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount he regulated the disciples fasting. He said,

"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou may appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:16-18).

Occasionally someone will ask about the practice of fasting today. Feasting gives more pleasure than fasting, and we certainly do more feasting! Is it inappropriate for Christians to practice fasting today? Let's make some observations:

1. In the New Testament, fasting is not commanded. It is simply an existing practice which Jesus regulates.

Furthermore, the kinds of circumstances in which people fasted are mentioned many more times without fasting, (with prayer, with decisions to follow God's will, etc.).

Therefore, it would seem extreme to require or

demand fasting among God's people today. It should be considered a voluntary practice.

2. In the Old and New Testaments God's people are seen fasting. Jesus said in Matthew 9:15 that after His death his disciples would fast. Christians did fast at important times, Acts 13, 14. The practice does not seem to be cultural in any way, but rather an effort for any generation to get closer to God through depriving one's self of food. Fasting helped focus the mind during important decisions or prayers. For that reason, it would certainly not be wrong for Christians to practice fasting under similar circumstances today.

Roy H. Lanier, Sr. writing in the Gospel Advocate quarterly wrote, "God who sees us without any show or ostentation will be attracted by our simple fasting, and He will reward us openly" (Annual Lesson Commentary, Oct. 15, 1953, p. 242).

Perhaps before an important family decision fasting would be helpful, or during a time of great emotion.

3. When a Christian practices fasting today, he or she would be bound by the teaching of Jesus on the subject. That is, the fasting must be a private matter and never one to make a show or to impress other people with our deep spiritual nature. Remember Jesus said, "That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret..." Matthew 6:18.

## Influence

Johnny Ramsey

In chapter three of II Corinthians we learn that Christians are supposed to be living epistles that influence others to embrace the gospel of the Lord. In Philippians 2:15-16 Paul challenges brethren to "shine as lights in the midst of a perverse generation" and thereby "hold forth the word of truth." It would seem that some church members today have overlooked this dimension of being an example unto the world. The greatest problem in gaining the attention of the world is that too many of us are just like the world!

I am firmly convinced that many members of the church never even consider their influence. Those in place of leadership ought especially to reflect seriously upon the impressions they make. A deacon that seldom attends worship assemblies can hinder a dozen young men who have esteemed him highly. An elder's wife who seldom associates with other Christian women (such as in Ladies Bible Class) can become a stumbling block to a score of people who look to her for inspirational guidance. A young couple who disturbs the assembly by talking and by an unbecoming display of affection can hinder a whole section of folk who come to

worship. A Bible class teacher who is unprepared or disinterested in his assignment can ruin the future attitude of a whole room of students. Critics of the preaching and song leading can cause many to leave the building void of the true spiritual uplift they should have received. Preachers can have an adverse influence by using the pulpit for jokes, personal illustrations and an ill-prepared sermon. Those who lead in prayer can hinder the worship by speaking too softly and by mouthing the same old routine words they borrowed from "good old brother Jones" 30 years ago.

However, the greatest misuse of our influence -- as living epistles -- takes place away from the building and on other days than Sunday. During the week, at office, factory, school and play is it not true that some of us are too much like the world ever to influence our neighbors for Christ? This is the basic reason the church is not growing as it should! When all of these golden but wasted opportunities have passed us by we see the cumulative loss the church has suffered in the realm of influence. One of these days we shall give an account for the souls we could have saved but that we did not save.

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# Closet Christianity

## Allen Webster

There is a difference between a secret religion and a religion in secret. Some in Jesus's day were secret disciples for fear of the Jews (John 7:13), including Nicodemus (John 19:38). Some today are secretive about where their affections lie, not wanting their schoolmates, co-workers, or friends to know that they are Christians. They should "come out of the closet" (Romans 1:16).

Others claim to be Christians, but only in public. They are outwardly pious, attend worship assemblies and try to keep good reputations. But that is about as much "religion" as they can muster. Christ is not mentioned around their dinner tables or invited into their inner chambers. When private lives become public record at Judgment, they will be red-faced. Jesus confronted some whose lips did not match their hearts (Matthew 15:8, 9; 23:1-39).

God intends for Christians to have a religion in secret, though not a secret religion! He wants us to practice "closet Christianity." What does this mean?

**CLOSET CHRISTIANS PRAY IN PRIVATE.** "But

thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6). This word *closet* (tameion) means "a chamber on the ground-floor or interior of an Oriental house (generally used for storage or privacy, a spot for retirement): -- secret chamber, closet, storehouse" (Strong, 5009, 70). Its application to us is a place of privacy. Your "closet" may be a study, bedroom, basement, an outside spot, or any place where your actions would remain unknown.

Hezekiah spread the letter before the Lord in private and earnestly prayed (II Kings 19:14). Elisha prayed with the door shut behind him (II Kings 4:33). Jesus prayed a stone's throw from His disciples (Luke 22:41). Christians are told to "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17), which would include praying privately.

We should each take time "to go into the closet" when rising in the morning and before retiring at night. Some find time during a lunch break to "find a closet" and pray. Such will add blessings

to our lives (James 4:2; 5:13, 16).

**CLOSET CHRISTIANS STUDY IN PRIVATE.** "Closet" Christians know that they cannot learn enough just in public classes. At best, only four hours a week are spent at a church in Bible study, which is only 1/42nd of the week. We need time each day "in the closet" with our Bibles and note pads.

Paul was a "closet Christian," for he asked for books even while in prison (II Timothy 4:13). He told the young workman Timothy to give diligence to study, lest he be ashamed (II Timothy 2:15). The Bereans searched the Scriptures everyday (Acts 17:11). The Bible contains a blessing for its readers on whatever day and at whatever hour it is consulted (Revelation 1:3).

This "closet" study, with no one to disturb, becomes very meaningful to the soul. As one communes with God with an open Bible in his lap, he draws closer to the One who wrote the book. His mind soaks up the Word like a dry sponge soaks up a glass of water or a starving man tackles a feast. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew

5:6).

**CLOSET CHRISTIANS MEDITATE IN PRIVATE.** Meditation on what is learned adds a whole new dimension to Bible study. This translates the ancient Bible into modern speech and life.

Isaac went into a field to meditate (Genesis 24:63). God told Joshua to meditate for prosperity (1:8). The blessed man meditates day and night (Psalm 1:2; cf. 19:14; 36:4; 119:97). The Psalms command meditation: ". . . commune with your own heart upon your bed . . ." (4:4); ". . . when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches" (63:6; cf. 104:34; 143:5). Timothy was instructed to meditate upon what he learned (I Timothy 4:15).

We can be in the "closet of meditation" at nearly any time. We can contemplate what we have recently learned about God's Word from sermons, classes, or personal studies while driving to work, mowing the grass, lying awake at night, waiting for appointments, hunting, fishing, taking a walk, or during a slow time at work.

Newton was loafing when he saw an apple fall and got the gravitation idea. Galileo

was searching for peace for his soul when he watched a great swinging lamp. It gave him the idea of the pendulum swinging to and fro as a means of measuring the passage of time. Watt was relaxing in the kitchen when he saw steam lifting the top of the tea kettle and conceived the idea of a steam engine. Who knows what great Bible truth you may discover in a couple hours of "loafing meditation?"

**CLOSET CHRISTIANS GIVE PRIVATELY.** But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3). The hypocrites give to be seen of men, and will receive no reward from God (Matthew 6:1, 2; cf. 5:16; 23:5). Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of this (Acts 5:1-10). Each is to give in public assemblies (I Corinthians 16:2), but there are times to give when no one else will know. The Good Samaritan gave when he met one in need (Luke 10:35). We should look for opportunities to give "in the closet." God sees and will reward (Matthew 10:42; I Timothy 5:25).

God loves "closet Christians!"

## The Pilgrim View

### Winfred Clark

The Bible often deals with a man's viewpoint. Or, to put it another way, the way a man may look at a thing. You have heard the phrase, "this is the way I see it."

Peter had a problem along this line. There was an occasion when Jesus spoke of his coming death and "how that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21). But Peter could not see that. He said, "be it far from thee Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22). Oh yes, we

know that Peter meant that he would defend him. But he could not see the Lord being killed. It did not fit his viewpoint.

Take a moment and look at the Lord's reply: "For thou savourest not those things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:23). Jesus was saying, "you look at things, not as God does, but as man does." In other words, Peter's thoughts were not God's thoughts. Peter's outlook is that of man and not God's.

Paul addressed this matter in his second letter to the Corinthians. As they passed through some very trying

times, they felt pressures. As they faced afflictions, their faith was tested. How did they view the matter? Listen to what Paul said "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18). With that kind of a viewpoint he could and would face those things which came his way.

We are told that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**I Corinthians 10:13 says in regard to temptation to sin, "God will not permit you to be tempted above that you are able . . ." In other words, there is always an alternative to sin in our lives.**

**Hear the fable of the rabbit stuck in the hole: He yelled for someone to help him get unstuck. A frog hopped along and said, "What's wrong?" The rabbit said, "I'm stuck! I have wiggled and squirmed and pushed, but I can't get out. I just can't. Will you get a ladder and help me get free?" The frog exhausted himself dragging a ladder back to the rabbit's hole. When he was almost there, he saw the rabbit standing outside the hole. The frog dropped the ladder angrily, hopped over to the rabbit and said, "I thought you said you couldn't get out of your hole!" The rabbit explained apologetically, "I couldn't, but a snake crawled in the other end, and I did!"**

**Let's work to not say, "I Can't" when what we really mean is, "I won't."**

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 3)

Continued From Page 1  
only is seen in the fact that the believer portrayed in John 3:16 avoids perishing in the next life. Yet in Luke 13:3, 5 Jesus said repentance is essential to avoid perishing. Hence, repentance is implied in believeth. As per Matthew 10:32 He will not confess those who refuse to confess Him in the here and now. Hence, confession of Christ

is implied in John 3:16. John 3:16 has the saved believer in mind. The believer is positioned -- IN CHRIST. Yet Jesus stipulated that only the believer who is baptized shall be saved as per Mark 16:16. Peter informs us in I Peter 3:21 that baptism now saves. Therefore, baptism is implied in John 3:16. This same Peter made the addition of the Christian graces an intense

imperative to our going home to heaven at last (II Peter 1:5-11). Hence, they are all included in the comprehensive "believeth." Matthew 7:21-23 makes it absolutely clear that only those who do the Father's will can be saved. Therefore, doing Jehovah's will is comprehended in this valiant verb believeth. Revelation 22:14 makes it absolutely

imperative that only those who do God's will can enter the gates into that eternal city on holy high. Hence, commandment-keeping is comprehended in believeth.

The truth of the matter is that everything one must do in order to become a Christian and remain one is amply comprehended in that verb believeth in John 3:16. In fact, all we must do to

avoid hell and attain heaven is packed into this comprehensive verb. It would be strange indeed if every expression of John 3:16 were comprehensive with the exception of the one pertaining to belief. But this one is NO exception; they are all comprehensives for a surety!

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

## The Pilgrim View

Continued From Page 3  
11:10). That viewpoint surely had an effect on his life. It would enable him to see best how to invest his life in the service of God.

### I. AN EXPLANATION OF THE PILGRIM VIEW

What do we mean when we speak of the "pilgrim view?" Someone has said, "one who is of another country residing with the natives." As far as the world is concerned, the Christian pilgrim is in the world but not of the world. He is a stranger and sojourner. He is unattached and sees himself here on a temporary basis.

The pilgrim has citizenship in heaven's land (Philippians 3:20). That is where his treasure is. That is where his affections are set (Colossians 3:1-2). He is concerned about what is above.

The pilgrim owes allegiance to heaven's Lord. This was

Paul's point as he wrote the letter to the church at Ephesus. He told them what God has done in that he "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head of the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). The pilgrim sees himself obligated to the One who is the head of the church and with that submission he has no problem.

The pilgrim is under heaven's law. It would and should be obvious to all, that if a man honors the Lord he will honor his law. That is the reason you find such statements as "so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). That passage says Christ has a law. It says that law is to be fulfilled. That means doing what it says do or refraining from that which it forbids.

The pilgrim will speak

heaven's language. Surely we know something of the particular language spoken by people who are citizens of certain lands. Haven't we been told what to say? Aren't we guided as to our speech? Peter said, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11).

### II. THE EFFECT OF THE PILGRIM VIEW.

It seems self evident that one could expect certain effects. We can take a look at the two letters written by Peter and see this to be the case.

For one thing this viewpoint will help us to evaluate things as we should. He speaks of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4). Now we need to note that this verse implies some things. There are some things that are corruptible. There are

some things that are defiled. There are some things that do fade away. He is helping us to evaluate those things that last and will endure.

He helps us appreciate the blood that redeems when He speaks of "the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot;" (I Peter 1:19). The pilgrim can see how he is redeemed. He knows who paid the price to set him free. He is under no illusion about that matter.

This viewpoint causes us to depend on the word of the Lord that will endure. Yes, he knows "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass . . . but the word of the Lord endureth forever" (I Peter 1:24-25). The word of men may fail and often does, but we can put our dependence on the word of God that does not waver.

This view will keep a man

close to the Lord. He knows God asked us to trust him when he said "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). We can depend on Him to do what he said he would do.

### III. THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF THE PILGRIM VIEW.

All a person has to do is read the book of Hebrews and he will find a great catalogue of such people in one chapter. The Hebrew writer said, "and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). But what kind of people are these? What would such a viewpoint make them do? That answer is found in verses 33-38 of the same chapter. They would not waver.

## Matthew 12:40 -- Three Days And Three Nights

### Wayne Jackson

Christ predicted that He would be raised from the dead "the third day" (Matthew 16:21). However, He also declared that He would rise "after three days" (Mark 8:31). To complicate the seeming difficulty, Jesus further stated that He would be in the grave "three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40). These references, which some see as disharmonious, puzzle sincere Bible students. What is the explanation?

The solution lies in understanding how the Jews measured time. According to a common Hebrew idiom, any part of a day could be counted as the whole day and night (cf. John Lightfoot, Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud & Hebraica, II, pp. 210, 211). There are many examples of such usage in the Scriptures.

(1) The rain of the flood was upon the earth "forty days and forty nights," or, "forty days" (Genesis 7:12, 17).

(2) In I Samuel 30:12, 13,

"three and three nights" and "three days" are equivalent expressions.

(3) When Israel asked Rehoboam to lighten its burdens, he said: "Depart ye for three days, then come again to me." They returned on "the third day" (cf. I Kings 12:5, 12).

(4) When Esther was about to risk entrance into the king's presence, she requested her fellow Jews to neither "eat nor drink three days, night or day," but on "the third day," she went in unto the king

(Esther 4:16; 5:1).

(5) Finally, note this. The Pharisees said to Pilate, "This deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day" (Matthew 27:63, 64).

One must understand, therefore, how the Israelites computed time. Our Lord did not contradict Himself! Is it not significant that no Jew ever accused Him of such in connection with His resurrection prophecies?

Thus, underline "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40, and in the margin of your Bible, enter some of the references which contain parallel time expressions. Such notes will help you in explaining this seeming Bible difficulty.

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August 12, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- The Chastening Of The Lord
- Our National Shame
- If Jesus Came Today
- "Preach The Word"
- Kym Polk Dies In Auto Accident
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Defying Authority

Volume 30 Number 33  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Truth

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

the

## Share Or Preach?

### Dennis Gullede

I have to wonder just how convincing Philip would have been if he had gone to Samaria to "share Jesus?"

The new buzzword today is the word "share." In the church we hear it quite often: "Share Jesus!", "Share the gospel," "Share conversion experiences." As a child I was taught to share. I teach my children the same virtue. It means to impart some of what you have to others. There is no real Christianity without sharing (Ephesians 4:28).

Preachers, however don't preach anymore. Now, they share. Perhaps there is a sense in which preaching is sharing, but the word share hardly fits

the meaning of Biblical preaching. Some in the church have forgotten what preaching really is.

There are two words in the New Testament that specifically define what Biblical preaching is. One is the Greek word *kerusso*, which is translated "to preach" fifty-three times in the New Testament. It denotes the actions of a herald, with these characteristics: (1) The herald has in his voice a note of *certainty*, (2) The herald has in his voice a note of *authority* because he is speaking for a king, (3) The herald's message is not his own; it is from the king. There are many in the church

today who are uncomfortable with certainty and authority in speaking. And for that reason they have abandoned the word "preach" in their vocabulary, and adopted the word "share," because it rings of a more "humble" and "caring" tone.

The second word is *evangelizo*, in the Greek, and is always used of the good news of Christ as proclaimed in the gospel. It means to make known the good message relative to sin and salvation. The Lord who commanded men to preach also told them what message to proclaim.

It is very hard for me to imagine John the Immerser "sharing Jesus" in Matthew 3.

He went into the wilderness of Judea, not to share, but to preach! What about Jesus? Did he begin to share or preach in Matthew 4:17? When Jesus sent out the twelve disciples, did he send them out to share the Kingdom of God, or to preach it? Something is lost in the translation of Acts 8:4 if I read it the way many of my brethren seem to understand it: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere sharing the word." No! They went preaching it! I have to wonder just how convincing Philip would have been if he had gone to Samaria to "share Jesus" (Acts 8:5, 12). He preached, and the results

were conversions of both men and women. I somehow cannot envision Philip "sharing Jesus" with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:35. It says he "preached unto him Jesus."

When Paul went to Athens, the text says, ". . . as his manner was, he went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:3-4). Somehow, sharing just doesn't convey the same idea!

--P.O. Box 345, Mabelvale, AR 72103.

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 4)

### Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In some five articles I am considering with you some of the needed lessons derived from a great verse of Sacred Scripture. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To date I have written of its deserved tributes, its unfortunate abuses, its key words and its comprehensive expressions. Love is a key word and this current article will zero in on that attractive aspect of John 3:16. It surely is a part of the gold of "The Golden Text of the Bible" as this magnificent

message has been delineated so dynamically.

### THE INSEPARABLE CONNECTIVE

Love and giving are wonderfully wedded and loyally linked in this precious passage. God loved and God gave. It has been correctly stated that one may give without loving due to the fact that he may give with any number of ulterior motives in mind. But one cannot love without giving. The Godhead does not do this. The Father does not do so; this verse makes that crystal clear. God the Son does not love minus giving. Affirmed by Paul in Ephesians 5 we read in a

couple of verses,

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . (verses 2, 25).

The Third Person of The Sacred Three, the Holy Spirit, likewise does not love without giving. He loved mankind and gave us the revelation of God's will -- the Holy Bible.

As followers of Deity we cannot love without giving. If we love God, we will give to

Him of our talents, money, service, loyalty, etc. If we love our fellow man, we will give what is best for his welfare. If we love fellow Christians, we will exhibit it in our conduct toward them, our help of them and our most solicitous care for them. We will rejoice with them when they experience joy; we will weep when they weep.

### GOD'S LOVE IN FOUR DIMENSIONS

John 3:16 delightfully depicts these four dynamic dimensions. Paul lists them in Ephesians 3:17-19,

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in

love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

There is beautiful breadth to God's love. This is strikingly observed in the fact that "God so loved the world." It is inexpressibly sad that cold, cruel and calloused Calvinism has never seen this beautiful breadth of God's love to the non-elect. As per Calvinism they are doomed to hell regardless of what they  
Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## The Chastening Of The Lord

Glenn Colley

There are a variety of Bible passages in which God is compared to our earthly fathers; Psalm 103:13, Luke 15:11-32, etc. . . The comparison in Hebrews 12:5-11 however, makes a unique and thought-provoking lesson. It says in part,

"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?"

The question naturally comes to mind, "What is the chastening of the Lord? How does he chasten us today?"

First, the Lord chastens us by permitting us to suffer. Although He could insulate His people from heartache and trials, He does not. Peter writes, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:7). Through the white hot fires of suffering often comes the purest and strongest faith. Suffering has a way of focusing our attentions away from this life and toward the next. For Christians who carry heavy burdens of suffering, sin often has less appeal, worship has deeper meaning, brethren are sweeter comrades, and heaven becomes the chief

longing of the soul. Can we not account our trials to the fact that our Father in heaven chastens His children whom He loves?

There are other ways Christians are chastened by God. The scriptures are "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). The old and well-remembered passage from the Apostle Paul says, "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 fact that God's word reproves us and corrects us demonstrates that it is an example of how God chastens His people. Considering that fact, isn't it a fearful thing to think that so many preachers are withholding all but occasional token verses in their preaching? The people need the word! While it's true, according to our key passage, that ". . . No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous . . .", it is also true that "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11). Preachers, don't stand in God's way when He is chastening His people with the scriptures because you only want to preach the gentle, comfortable subjects! Preach the word in season and out (II Timothy 4:2)! Declare the

whole counsel of God, (Acts 20:27)!

Though largely ignored in some churches, the Lord also exercises His chastening through the discipline of the church. By that we refer to the teaching of II Thessalonians 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." What is the purpose of our Father's chastening? Paul wrote, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5:5). Why do we often fail to practice this teaching when the command is so clearly and keenly made? Just as practicing what the Holy Spirit taught us in these passages will produce good fruit, failing to practice the teachings will produce sickly fruit and grievous results.

No, we do not enjoy these sources of God's chastening. But take heart Christians! When we taste God's sometimes bitter chastening and dedicate ourselves to be "exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11), instead of distraught thereby, we will enjoy the "Peaceable fruit of righteousness" which He promised.

God didn't promise smooth sailing, but a safe landing.

## Our National Shame

Bobby Key

This morning's news reported that revenue from liquor sales has been declining for the past few months. As drinking habits have turned more to beer and wine, the sale of hard liquor has decreased. The liquor industry was reported to be afraid that people are beginning to use "moderation"; therefore, they are accelerating their advertising campaigns, hoping to encourage more people to begin drinking, and those who already drink to drink more. After listening to this broadcast, I came to the office where a teenage boy was waiting to talk with me about a drunken father who had raped his own ten year old daughter.

The drinking of liquor is our nation's shame. There is no secret about it, I am a sworn, eternal, uncompromising enemy of the liquor traffic. Liquor is a degrading influence upon all mankind; upon the individual, upon the businesses, upon public morals, and upon the home. It is responsible for most of our nation's crime. It is responsible for the majority of our nation's automobile fatalities. It is responsible for much of our nation's poverty. Yet, one can scarcely pick up a newspaper or magazine, listen to the radio, or watch a television program without the liquor industry trying to influence him to become a drinker. Don't be misled by their false claims. "Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 10:1).

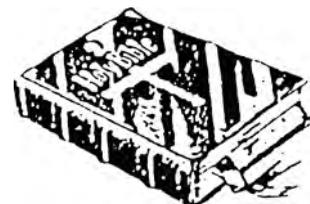
A judge said, "I have no hesitancy in saying that 90% of the crime is caused by strong drink." We are told

that the sale of liquor lightens our tax load; my friend, this is just not so. We are all compelled to pay higher taxes to clean up the ruin which liquor causes. Eastern State Hospital in Vinita reported last month that most of their admissions are for the treatment of alcoholism. Our prisons are overflowing, and society in general is poorer, because of drinking. The man who doesn't believe in hell has never seen a drunkard's home. The devil and the bartender are on the same team.

Liquor is the devil's best friend and God's enemy. It promises happiness, and brings sorrow. It promises health, and causes disease. It promises prosperity, and sends poverty. Drinking is a trap - easy to fall into and hard to get out of. The only absolute way to avoid becoming an alcoholic or a drinking driver is to practice total abstinence.

Years ago officials determined whether a man belonged in a mental institution by putting him in a room with a running faucet and a cement floor. They gave the patient a mop and told him to mop up the water. If he had sense enough to turn off the faucet, and mop up the floor, they would send him home. However, if he let the faucet continue to run, they knew he was crazy. We are trying to mop up the liquor problems with more taxes, more welfare, more mental institutions, more prisons, more treatment centers, when the thing we really need to do is shut off the source of supply.

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



### The Words Of Truth

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# If Jesus Came Today

## Johnny Ramsey

The Christian who delights in his destiny is sure to have a better life on earth.

He will come someday. Somehow we never think it just might be this very day. No one knows when the awesome occasion shall arrive (Matthew 25:13). Many shall be totally unprepared when, as a thief in the night, our Savior will come with mighty angels to be admired by the saints who will meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). In Acts 1:11, as Christ ascended in the clouds to the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:13, 14), the faithful were promised that "this same Jesus" shall return in the same manner in which He left the earthly scene. What a monumental occasion that will be! "There's a great day coming/ When the saints and the sinners/ Shall be parted right and left/ Are you ready for that day to come?"

If Jesus came today we would certainly want to be genuine Christians so as to meet the Lord without cause for serious regret. We would deeply desire to be appraised as sincere and loyal, dedicated and true, as

servants of the most high God!

The hilltops of glory would be a welcomed sight and faithful saints would eagerly await reunion with the loved ones who had gone on before who lived and died in Christ (Revelation 14:13). "Beyond the sunset, O glad reunion/ With our dear loved ones who have gone before/ O day of gladness, O day unending/ Beyond the sunset forevermore."

The only way to be ready when Jesus comes is to stay prepared by living for the Master every step of the way. Heaven truly is a prepared place for prepared people. We must, therefore, be steadfast (Acts 2:42) and not haphazard (Luke 14:18). Folk who never put the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33) will spend eternity with heaven's door forever shut to them (Matthew 25:10). The urgency of daily exhortation will take on new meaning to those who died in sin (Hebrews 3:13; John 8:21). The benediction of Nehemiah 13:31 will bless the endless joy of the devoted follower of the Redeemer, "Remember me, O my God, for good!"

The trials of our earthly sojourn and the fiery persecutions of the world will fade into oblivion on the golden street of glory (Romans 8:18). Each step we take in the direction of heaven will bear precious fruit in the land of fadeless day (Revelation 21:1-5).

"Nearer, still nearer, Lord to be Thine./ Sin with its follies I gladly resign/ All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride/ Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified."

On that other shore, calling to remembrance the struggles and obstacles Satan erected on our path below, we will rejoice to realize that I John 4:4 was abundantly true, "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world."

The clarion call of II Corinthians 2:14 will continue to bless and thrill our souls, "We are always led in triumph in Christ!"

In view of these brilliant Bible points, why would anyone return to the beggarly elements and pollutions of the world that would militate against the beautiful home of the soul? To miss heaven and go to hell is too horrible to contemplate. Reasonable

disciples continue to press on to higher ground as we maintain a disdain for mammon.

If Jesus came today, we would ardently desire wayward brethren to be restored to full duty in the vineyard of the Redeemer. To leave the way of holiness and revert to the abyss of iniquity is a tragedy even in this life. To miss the peace passing understanding that godliness provides is sadness beyond description. Add to that the pangs of torment (Luke 16:19-31) throughout eternity and we have a message that ought to warn us sufficiently to cleave wisely to the Lord (Acts 11:23, 24). As James 5:19, 20 challenges us, so let us bring the lost brother back from the wages of sin to the loving forgiveness that awaits the prodigal. We must, in view of judgment, bring the wandering ones back to Jesus.

If Jesus came today, what a

relief it would be to find deliverance from this old licentious, debauched and hellish world! To be able to dwell in the pristine beauty of the divine realm to be devoid of cursing, profane and blasphemous people who denied all that was holy and sublime would be joy unspeakable and full of glory to the children of God.

To bask in the precious association of the redeemed of all ages would truly be glory divine. Yes, if Jesus came today, the hope of heaven (Titus 1:2) would become reality. Heaven will surely be worth it all. An old song reminds us, "And the toils of the road will seem nothing/ When we get to the end of the way."

--Johnny Ramsey is an instructor for the Brown Trail School of Preaching and may be contacted at 3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014.

## "Preach The Word"

### Glenn A. Posey

These are the words from the pen of the apostle Paul, "Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2). That was the call of the first century, and it remains the call for the twentieth century. There is not another vocation in all the world that is more honorable than "PREACHING THE WORD." Why is preaching the Word of God so vitally important?

**1. The Gospel is God's Power to Save.** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). In other words, the gospel is the means that God uses to reach man in order to save him. So, it must be preached to "every creature" and "every nation" (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15).

**2. The Gospel is Divine**

**Wisdom.** Paul said, "But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12). Peter said, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). Every scripture is "God breathed" (II Timothy 3:16). That makes the Bible a Sacred Book in every sense. If a version of the Bible is accurate, then it is just as inspired as the original autographs. The gospel can mold and shape us into the kind of individuals that please God. This is why the gospel must be carried into all the world. Someone has rightly said, "No man has the right to hear the gospel twice until all men have heard it

once.

**3. The Gospel is Man's Only Hope.** How else could anyone find out what he must do to be saved? God being "no respecter of persons" (Romans 2:11), there is one way God deals with everyone alike, and that is through the gospel. When the gospel is preached in its purity and power, and believed and obeyed by man, God keeps his promise to save him. NOTE: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The Gospel is the standard for life and judgement (John 12:48).

**4. The Gospel Message Never Changes.** The gospel is objective not subjective truth. The gospel is not of "any private interpretation" Continued On Page 4

## Kym Polk Dies In Auto Accident

In a tragic automobile accident on August 1 Kym Polk and his two children were killed. His wife Linda has been hospitalized, is in stable condition, and is expected to recover.

Kym was a young Gospel preacher. He was a good man and loved the word of God. He was a student in Freed-Hardeman College at the same time I was. He and his sweet children will be sorely missed by their earthly family and by their Christian family as well.

Linda is the daughter of Glann Lee, who preaches for the church in Fort Chiswell, Virginia. Linda faces large medical bills. Our understanding is that Kym died instantly, and the children were hospitalized prior to death. There are naturally bills to be paid. For that reason, The Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama, where Kym's parents are members, has set up the "Linda Polk Medical Fund." I want to encourage our readers who are able to contribute to this fund to do so. Whether you are able to contribute financially or not, please remember Linda in your prayers. Her future will require the mustering of all the faith and strength she has acquired through her life.

We sincerely offer her, and the families involved, our deepest sympathy.

Glenn Colley

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Let's try an experiment. Right now, on the screen of your imagination, picture all of your possessions. The car, the house, the bank account, the furniture, everywhere there is. Now, stand back and tell me, what's the most valuable possession you have. Actually, the true answer may surprise you. It's your soul.

Charlemagne was king of the Franks and Roman Emperor of the 6th and 7th centuries. It is said that when his tomb was unearthed, the corpse was found situated in a seated position with an open Bible on the lap and a bony finger pointed to Mark 8:36 where Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

You see, our soul is our most priceless possession. Let's work to deal with it according to God's word.

# An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 4)

Continued From Page 1  
do or do not do.

There is lovely length to God's love. This is lovingly witnessed in the fact "that he gave his only begotten Son" for man's redemption. He gave the best of Heaven; He gave the dearest of the dear; He gave the one who had been the darling object of His eternal affections. Calvary exhibits this lovely length of Jehovah's love and affection for lost humanity.

There is a delightful deepness to God's love; His love exceeds any calculated

description of its dynamic depth. This is seen in the fact that He reaches down to keep men from going to hell. He is not the Insensitive Tyrant some have pictured who delights in sending multiplied millions to hell. Paul wrote, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:3, 4). Peter penned the sentiment, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;

but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). The longer He waits in sending Jesus the second time, the more opportunity man has to render obedience to the gospel that saves from sin and prepares for heavenly felicity in yonder's world. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). The subsequent verse to John 3:16 reads, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;

but that the world throughout him might be saved" (v. 17).

The holy height of God's love is also suggested by Paul in Ephesians 3:18. This is also seen in John 3:16 as the passage tells us that those who obediently believe in Him may "have everlasting life" or "eternal life" (ASV). The height of God's love is seen in His great, moving determination to have His people surround the throne of His Majesty in the sweet by and by. It is significant to observe that Paul in the Ephesian text listed these

four dimensions of love in exactly the same order in which the Lord placed them in John 3:16 -- breadth, length, depth and height.

There should be a breadth, length, depth and height to our love for God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, the Bible, the church, the gospel, the souls of men and our precious brethren in the Lord. Dimensional must be our love if followers of the Lord we become and remain.

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

## "Preach The Word"

Continued From Page 3  
that is, its veracity does not depend upon whether or not one rightly divides, believes, or obeys it. The gospel means the same thing in the twentieth century that it did in the first century. And that's why it must be preached to every creature. The greatest challenge that man has ever faced is placed upon him by God to "preach the Word," without additions or subtractions. He must just

preach the pure, unadulterated gospel. That's the only thing that will save man. There is always a temptation for man to tamper with the gospel in order to appease his own conscience. The gospel is given to change man. So, we have a changeless gospel. The method of preaching the gospel can and should be changed with the passing of time, but the message must never be changed or

perverted (Galatians 1:6-9).

The word of God must be preached if men are to be saved. Preaching is not out-of-date. It is by the preaching of the Gospel that men are lead to Christ. The world needs the Gospel because the wisdom of man cannot save. God said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent . . . for after that in the wisdom of God the world by

wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:19, 21).

Let our faith stand, "Not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:5). There has never been a time when this text was more needed than in our own generation. Let every Gospel Preacher understand he is to preach God's glorious gospel to a lost and dying world. He

is obligated to preach the gospel if men like it or not, believe it or not. Of course, he is to preach it in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Glenn A. Posey has been preaching for 35 years. He currently works with the East Cullman Church in Cullman, AL where he has been for the past 12 years. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 297, Cullman, AL 35055.

## Defying Authority

**Elwood Holt**  
Out in Colorado there is a scenic bridge which spans the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas, a thousand feet above the roaring waters. One day some people were photographing the great chasm, and seeking a better view, climbed out on a rugged peak. Officials ordered them back, explaining that it was against the rules to climb to such dangerous places. One young man defied the officials and protesting visitors, saying he was tending to his own business, and inviting them to do likewise. He willfully disobeyed by climbing farther. Then he slipped and was hurled three hundred feet to a narrow ledge from which his rescuers on long ropes recovered his lifeless body hours later. He had defied authority, thinking he knew better, and had paid with his life.

We are saddened when we look all around us in the spiritual world and see the

same reckless defying of authority. Only when we defy the authority of Christ and the Word, our daring is more pathetic than the young man who defied the earthly authorities. We are jeopardizing our souls, not our bodies. Nothing in all this universe is as important as the immortal souls of men. Yet the average person plays with his soul by feeding it upon chaff and not upon the stipulations of God's word. The record very clearly teaches us, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). It is not within man's power to map out his own fate. Christ is the captain and if it is otherwise, fate will be man's. Jesus taught that "wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter thereby" (Matthew 7:13). The fellow who follows the masses will walk in that broad way. The one who walks in the straight and narrow will not be crowded out because of

the multitudes. Why do so many prefer the broad way to the narrow one? Simply because they can't walk in the narrow one and have their own way. They want to be their own bosses, their own captains, they want to charter their own courses, and others also. In short, they don't intend to have anyone telling them what they can do, or cannot do, including the Lord of Glory! Now just how long can we escape if we maintain this attitude? It is open, flagrant, defying and denial of divine worship. When God says a thing it is so! It can be so whether He says so or not, but out of love for the human race he has made the way so plain that it admits no justifiable confusion. When God tells us what to do, what to believe, how to walk, how to talk, then we must accept that as the last Word of authority.

When He tells in a positive manner what He wants us to do as worship, who are we to question and finally do

something else that we like better? When God tells us what the Church should do and how to do it, why should we question God's authority? "Oh, but it is so nice!" people say, or, "It just looks better to do this or that instead of doing what the Bible says." Again who is puny man or woman to withstand God? We are taught, "let God be true but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). A person said to me once when he noticed certain ways we carry on the Lord's work, "I just don't see how you get along without this or that." My reply was, "We get along fine, for we are seeking to please God." The Good Book tells us that "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

This should forever settle the matter. Whom should we

follow? -- men or God? Our own dictates or the dictates of His Word? Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth hath been given to me," (Matthew 28:18). Now what in the realm of authority is left for man or woman? NONE AT ALL. When men begin to legislate for the Lord, or, to use a more modern expression, "when they begin to think for him, and put words in his mouth," they have overstepped their authority and are shaking his end of the rope. God who made us surely has enough ability to guide us across this fitful life. He knows what we should BELIEVE, DO, and THINK. Let us seek to bring our hearts into union with His by doing what He says, whether we can see a reason or not. "We walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). The young man lost his life by ignoring authority. Let us take heed lest we lose our never-dying souls in the same way.

August 19, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Painless Temptation
- Please Make The Needed Corrections
- "Examine Yourselves"
- God's Love And Man's Purpose
- Was Peter The First Pope?
- Most Of A Minute
- Younger Preachers

Volume 30 Number 34  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

ie

## An In Depth Study Of John 3:16 (No. 5)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

The passage under current consideration reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Emphasized have been tributes, abuses, superlative words, comprehensive expressions, the divine connective and the four dimensions of God's love for humanity.

### MILITANT REFUTATION OF ERROR

Multitudes of religious people have long held to the idea that John 3:16 provides an umbrella under which they could reside regardless of what errors they have espoused. They have felt that John 3:16 is not a militant passage in regard to religious errors but extends comfort and consolation to people of all religious shades of thought, opinion and practice. John 3:16 does NOT fit this soothing sentiment at all and for obviously substantial reasons.

It is highly doubtful if any other passage in the whole Bible refutes as much error in the religious world as does John 3:16. The apostle of love wrote this passage. He wrote it as a spiritual "son of thunder" (Mark 3:17). He wrote it under the supervisory direction of "the Spirit of truth." Truth and error have no affinity -- NONE! He wrote it from a heart filled with love. He wrote it in regard to a God of love and Messiah of love. Yet he refuted so many errors in the setting forth of his dynamic

declaration. Today, nearly all kinds of error are tolerated in the name of love. Yet in Bible times no error was condoned by God, Christ and the Spirit of truth in the name of love. The people of God never condoned love and error as being beautifully compatible. Love and error are like truth and error -- poles apart!

The second word of John 3:16 is God. This refutes all forms of atheism, agnosticism and infidelity. If John 3:16 is so, and IT IS, then atheism, agnosticism and infidelity are false to the very core. They ARE! If John 3:16 is so, then the Psalmist of Ancient Israel was right on the target of truth when he wrote of the God-denier as a fool (Psalms 14:1; 53:1). Fool, in these passages, derives from the little Hebrew word nabal which literally means "empty person" -- One empty of head, heart and hand. John 3:16 strikes at the entire Communistic philosophy of this century which has rested on the "no God" theory. The walls of Communism are crumbling throughout the world today and well they should.

The third and fourth words of John 3:16 are "so loved." These two worthy words refute the doctrine long held by men and popularly known as Deism. Deism says that God created the world and wound it up as you and I might a clock. When He finished with His work of creation, as per the theory, He stepped out of the picture of cosmos supervision and human concern and is allowing the universe to

unwind. He maintains no further interest in His created order of mundane things and creatures. If John 3:16 is so, and it IS, then Deism is false to the very core. No man can be a Deist and believe John 3:16.

The fifth and sixth words of weight of John 3:16 are "the world." God loved the world. This strikes a fatal blow at the whole religious movement of mania known as Calvinism. Calvinism has long held that Jesus died only for the elect. This is what the system means by "The Limited Atonement". This is one of their five cardinal doctrines of fallacy and falsehood. John 1:29 states that Jesus had in mind making provisions for the sin of the world as a whole. Hebrews 2:9 affirms that He tasted death for all men. Passages like Matthew 11:28-30 and Revelation 22:17 include ALL who will come in the disposition of obedience. If John 3:16 is so, and it IS, Calvinism is false foundationally. No person can be a Calvinist and accept John 3:16.

The words of John 3:16, "that he gave," thoroughly refute the idea that God is an Angry Tyrant who is without mercy or compassion. It thoroughly refutes the modernistic concept that He was pawning upon the world a "slaughter-house" religion. What slander against Christ and Calvary.

The next words of weight and wisdom are "his only begotten Son." This refutes the Moslem religion, the social Judaism which denies Him as God's only begotten Son and

modernism which does the same also in our time. If John 3:16 is true, and it IS, then Ancient Judaism, Modern Judaism and Current Modernism are false to the very core of their corrupt teaching.

John 3:16 speaks of a Sender (the Father) and the Sent (the Son or the Christ). This refutes the Oneness Holiness doctrine which states there is but one Person in the Godhead. Father and Son add up to more than one. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who inspired this marvelous statement, surely add up to more than one!

"Whosoever" is next as a key word. It, too, refutes Calvinism. That wonderful "whosoever" includes all who will come to the Lord in His own appointed way.

The conditional "believeth" (an obedient faith) refutes the idea of universal salvation. All will not be saved unconditionally. People will be saved conditionally, i.e., upon meeting the terms of pardon and continued acceptance by God. Since John 3:16 imposes conditional obedience for salvation and universalism denies such, John 3:16 and Universalism are totally exclusive. John 3:16 strikes down Universalism world without end.

"In him" is significant. In Christ, NOT in another, is where salvation is positioned. This refutes salvation as being found in Masonry, the Moslem religion, the social gospel, morality, the New Age movement, etc. All these

strike out as offering salvation from sin.

"Should not perish" strikes down every false religion that would make hell simply a figment of human imagination or simply a state of annihilation without any conscious reality experienced subsequent to judgment. If John 3:16 is so, and it IS, then the doctrine of the "no hell" advocates is false to the very core. If John 3:16 is so, and it IS, then the doctrine of the materialists such as Jehovah's Witnesses and ancient and modern forms of Sadduceeism is as false as false can be!

"But have everlasting life" concludes this valiant verse. These words refute every religious philosophy and all secular teaching denying man a spirit, a resurrection and ultimately a heaven for all the righteous. John 3:16 strikes a fatal blow at every form of materialism. One cannot accept Sadduceeism and believe John 3:16.

Do you know of another verse in Holy Writ that strikes fatal blows at more religious error than does John 3:16? John 3:16 is not a gigantic umbrella for error in all religious shades. It is a spiritual umbrella offering spiritual shade only to those who want to believe, love and obey truth and truth only.

Thanks be to God for the unspeakable gift of John 3:16. How rich and comprehensive the valiant verse is in all its foundational facets, and its comprehensive composition.

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

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Painless Temptation

Glenn Colley

The most common and serious problem facing man today isn't nuclear warheads, or cancer, or the liberal left in government. It is sin, and the temptation to sin. It is more serious than those things which destroy the body because it destroys body and soul. How common? To say that everyone has at some time been tempted to sin is too limited a picture. The fact is, all have been tempted, and all have been tempted with sins that have been a temptation for centuries. Paul wrote, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man . . . (I Corinthians 10:13)."

This article, however, is not about the universal presence of temptation. It is rather about the way we think about the temptation in our lives.

Have you ever considered the fact that the folks who struggle the most with temptation are the most devout Christians? They don't sin as often as others do, but they suffer more with the temptations they face. A man who cares little for Christ won't even feel the sting of temptation when it comes. If the action offers him more pleasure than pain, he'll simply sin. A Christian wrestles with temptation. He understands the blackness and seriousness of sin, and wants to avoid it at all costs. He "abhors that which is evil" (Romans 12:9).

This important point is demonstrated in at least two key passages of the

scriptures.

First, look at Hebrews 11:37. Speaking of, and listing some of the unimaginable sufferings endured by the righteous over the ages, the writer observes.

"Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy . . ."

Notice that among this list of heart wrenching agonies endured by our people is that they were tempted. This is remarkable because of the light way most people view temptation. Is temptation to sin a light thing to you? Do you sometimes struggle and even suffer while solidly determined not to sin against God?

Second, notice Hebrews 2:18. Speaking of our Lord, the writer says, "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." We may be less surprised to hear that Jesus "suffered" through the temptation He faced. "After all," we might reason, "There was so much riding on Him not sinning even once. He Had to remain sinless. It is

not so with us. We have less stress to avoid sin." But is that a right attitude?

My determination and desire to be sinless should be strong and constant. Yes, we will sometimes fail and disappoint ourselves and God. But we must try! If we are going to take sin and righteousness seriously, we are going to have to struggle with, and win over temptation. Thankfully we aren't alone.

Peter wrote, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (II Peter 2:9)." James wrote, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded (James 4:7, 8)."

Remember that there is always a way to combat and overcome temptation, I Corinthians 10:13. And remember that when you struggle with temptation and win, you've been benefited by the fight. James 1:2 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers (various) temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

## Please Make The Needed Corrections

Neal Pollard

To: Whom it may concern  
From: concerned brothers  
and sisters  
Re: Policy Amendment

Dear Wayward, Lukewarm, and Nominal Christians,

Concerning all the calls and visits made to you and your family by the preacher, the elders, the deacons, their wives, and every other faithful Christian, please make a note of some refreshing policy changes made recently for your benefit. As you know, there seems to be an "unspoken understanding" about the procedure and decorum of the aforementioned visits and calls. During the course of the conversation, the concerned caller or visitor will usually mention how much they have missed you at worship services for the past few months. Perhaps they will invite you to Bible school or Wednesday night services, which all of you know you have rarely attended. They might work up the courage to tell you they are concerned about you and your children. Or, they will tell you how much they love your soul and want to spend eternity with you in heaven. Having received your cue at this point, you probably mention all the company you have had lately, the four-year-old's sniffles that kept all eight of you home six weeks, the hunting

trip that detained you on Sunday, or the heavy drizzle that left a chill in the air last Lord's Day evening. Then, head hanging somewhat, the visitor or caller asks about your mother-in-law's surgery and the PTA meeting next Monday, shakes your hand, and leaves.

We came up with two good solutions to resolve this uncomfortable exchange. We will briefly describe one, then the other for your consideration:

1. Carefully record, on paper, the "reasons" why you have been attending sporadically and refraining from the work of the church. Please include all "pet emergencies," all rare ailments (such as "itching teeth"), and trips to preserve your health (like the Sunday wrist aerobics down at the fish pond). When you are called or visited by the faithful, offer no excuses at all. Instead, mention them to God the next time you go to Him in prayer. This will provide you with good practice for the day when you actually do stand before the Lord and give an account.

2. (We would recommend this one). Do not miss the worship services of the church unless you cannot come. Put the Lord first and make your plans around the work of the church. Bring your children to Bible school as faithfully

Continued On Page 4



### The Words Of Truth

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# "Examine Yourself"

**W. A. Holley**

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Corinthians 13:5).

The American Standard version of the foregoing quotation reads as follows: "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves . . ."

All who claim to be Christians should cast a long, hard, critical look at themselves. Oftentimes, we seem to see others' fault, but not our faults. Jesus told the story of the mote and the beam. Read it (Matthew 7:1-5).

One sinner in the church can do great harm. The writer of Ecclesiastes, says, "One sinner destroyeth much good" (Ecclesiastes 9:18).

We shall herewith present a few examples of some sinners who have done great harm to themselves and to God's Holy Cause:

(1) Dathan, Abiram and Korah rebelled against Moses' leadership of God's people. Their rebellion cost them and their families their lives (Numbers 16:1-35). Read these verses and learn to obey God (Hebrews 5:8-9).

(2) Achan took a garment, silver and gold, which had been devoted to God and as a result he and his family were stoned to death. Hence, because of one man's disobedience Israel was defeated at Ai. Read Joshua 7:1-26. Achan thought that he would never be found out, but God always knows.

(3) Manasseh the King of Judah became so wicked that he departed from God's way, thus leading his whole nation into idolatry. He built altars to Baal, thus worshipping the sun, moon, stars and planets. He even caused his son to pass through the fire (II Kings 21:1-18). Manasseh never stopped to see where his foolishness was leading him. When one sows the wind, he reaps the whirlwind

(Hosea 8:7).

(4) Sin, once planted in one's mind, grows and grows. ". . . Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15, ASV). Hence, sin grows until it is fullgrown unless one gets out of the sinning business!

(5) Many are deceived by so called "little sins." Actually there are no "little sins" because sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). Truly, it is those "little sins" that get us into trouble. ". . . The little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Solomon's Song 2:15). The "little foxes" are our "little sins" which we often consider to be of no consequence at all. If we kill the little foxes they will not grow into big foxes.

Most of us have some secret sin or sins which we try to hide from the general public,

but we cannot hide them from God's all-seeing eye (Hebrews 4:12). The next verse says, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (NIV). We suggest that Psalms 19:12 and 90:8, be read.

Now, let us look into our hearts and think: Have you ever considered something like the following situations?

One may not steal, but he will overwork his employees. One will not lie about his neighbor, but he will take up a false report against the preacher, or the elder, or the Governor and slander their names without the slightest compunction of conscience.

One may condemn drinking by others, but be a drinker himself. One preacher while drunk had an accident in which a woman was killed. In the pulpit he was always against drinking. One may not openly mistreat his

fellowman, but he does practice such against his family. One may not defile the assembly with impurity, but let someone take his parking place, he will let his temper run wild and think nothing of it. One may refuse to make his/her contribution to the support of the Lord's church, but think nothing of spending \$200 to attend a football game.

How often do we condemn others for doing what we ourselves do? It is time for self-examination.

Just go to the mirror and look at yourself

And see what that man has to say;

For it isn't your father, or mother, or wife,

Whose judgment upon you must pass.

The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life

Is the one staring back from the glass.

--Author Unknown

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

## God's Love And Man's Purpose

**Johnny Ramsey**

When we consider the benevolent hand of God in the affairs and provisions of mankind we can see a correlation between the two situations. The love of the Lord and the proper purpose in our lives truly go hand in hand. Sadly, millions never understand this beautiful parallel and thus squander their pilgrimage upon the earth and will stand empty-

handed in the Day of Judgment! Norman Trott wrote these words of sober reflection:

"No time for God . . .

What fools we are to clutter up our lives

With common things

And leave without heart's gate

The Lord of life -- and life itself --

Our God!"

One of these days when we

need Him most we will be bereft of his sublime presence because we shut the Creator out of our daily plans. What an eternal tragedy! In chapter five of II Corinthians we read of the brilliant love of God. Notice these six points in the natural outline the Holy Spirit furnished for Paul:

Divine love constrains us because:

1. It is Universal - "one died for all."

2. It is Transforming - verse seventeen.

3. It is Reconciling -- verse eighteen.

4. It is Demanding - verse twenty.

5. It is Unselfish - "God made him to be sin for us."

6. It is Comforting - chapter six, verse two.

In view of these blessings we ought to stand amazed at the mercy and grace of our Maker. While we were yet

deep in sin, God commended His love toward us (Romans 5:8). He laid our iniquities upon the only begotten Son (Isaiah 53). And, that same favor is extended in the direction of ungrateful folk today. Notice the pathos of Romans 10:21 . . .

"All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Continued On Page 4

## Was Peter The First Pope?

**Mike Benson**

Dear Mike,

"I have heard it said that Peter was the first pope. Where does it say this in the New Testament?"

I have been unable to find where the designation "pope" was ever ascribed to Peter. In fact, I cannot find the word "pope" anywhere in the Bible. Consider:

1. Peter was married, "Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever" (Matthew 8:14). This conflicts

with today's idea that the pope must remain celibate.

2. Peter was unwilling to accept the worship that was offered him, "As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man" (Acts 10:24-25); this conflicts with the fact that the pope today often receives the homage of would-be worshippers.

3. Peter was rebuked for his hypocrisy, "But when Peter had

come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11); this conflicts with the idea of "papal infallibility."

The Bible does tell us that Peter was:

- A disciple
- An apostle
- A Christian
- A preacher
- An elder

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

U.S. News and World Report recently ran an article entitled, "When Nightmare of False Arrest Comes True." What a terrifying thought! Here's a situation the magazine gives: "A security guard approaches you while you're shopping and asks to see what you have in your pocket. When you show him an item, (which you had purchased elsewhere), he says you shop lifted it off their shelf! What would you do? Other false arrests occur when a person commits a crime and an innocent man who resembles him is charged with it." I think nightmare is the right word.

Let me remind you quickly, however, that a perfect court is soon to take place.

--It won't have an earthly judge, but a heavenly.

--It won't be based on the law of the land, but on the law of God.

--And unlike today's courts, it will make no error.

"And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." (Matthew 25:32).

Are you prepared to face the court that makes no mistakes?

# God's Love And Man's Purpose

Continued From Page 3

Jehovah sent not His Son to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:17). Such goodness should lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4) but some just will not allow heaven's will to enter their hard hearts (Matthew 23:37). Why would anyone spurn such matchless love?

"In loving-kindness Jesus came

My soul in mercy to reclaim  
And from the depths of sin  
and shame

Through grace He lifted  
me."

Some evidently are confused as to their purpose in living and their preparation for dying. The ancient Egyptian culture taught folk to "use this life to acquire wealth and be ready when resurrected in another realm." In the Persian philosophy Zoroaster implied that man

had very little individual honor because whichever "god" created him caused him to serve or be served and thus his destiny was set at birth, irrevocably! Five centuries before Christ a leading teacher commended asceticism to offset growing old while Zeno of Athens taught the Stoics that "the highest good is virtue." Sadly his view of virtue was much like Confucius:

"Do not do unto others what you do not want othes to do to you."

This negative emphasis eliminates active goodwill toward others. Jesus took care of that with the golden rule of Matthew 7:12.

Of course Epicurus told men to "eat, drink and be merry" because of his mistaken view that man was totally mortal. Today some skeptics morbidly state:

"Life is a cruel joke somone has played upon men."

To the war monger we are just so much "cannon-fodder." The evolutionist insists we are the product of some lower form of life while many religionists proclaim we are "a child of Satan, born in sin, totally depraved." The Bible has a completely different view of these matters.

"I was sinking deep in sin  
Far from the peaceful shore  
Very deeply stained within  
Sinking to rise no more . . .  
. . . Love lifted me!"

Yes, man's true worth and heaven's esteem for us is tound in Genesis 1:26 . . . made in the image of God are we! Again, in I John 4:14 . . . "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." He is "the Father of our spirits" (Zechariah 12:1). He gives unto us "all things that

pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3) and promises to bless those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). In Hosea 11:4 and 14:4 we have these precious promises from our Maker:

"I will love them freely; I draw them with bands of love."

Therefore, the worth of an individual is dependent upon what we make of ourselves in view of the unmerited favor heaven has bestowed upon us. We are not "a god unto ourselves" but rather we ought to be "a fellow-worker with God" (II Corinthians 6:1). We are not on earth to primarily enjoy ourselves, get gain, achieve power and popularity but to honor our Creator in lives devoted to the glorious gospel of Christ.

When we honestly observe our decadent society we can see why it once "grieved God

that He had made man" (Genesis 6:6). Conversely, we are aware of rejoicing in Heaven when sinners repent (Luke 15:10). We ought to specialize in making God happy by loyally following the mandates of glory! This is the purpose of life blended with the love of God. In a well-known hymn by Charles Wesley we sing:

"Changed from glory into glory

Till in heaven we take our place

Till we cast our crowns  
before Thee

Lost in wonder, love and praise."

We are not our own but have been bought with a tremendous price. Let us therefore glorify God in our bodies which are His (I Corinthians 6:19-20)!

## Please Make The Needed Corrections

Continued From Page 2

as you put them on the bus and send them to school.

We are sure that you will ultimately prosper from this lifestyle amendment,

especially from a spiritual standpoint. No doubt, you will be teaching your child to make the right decision in important matters; plus, the caller and visitor who has

been using his time to encourage your rededication may contact some lost soul he or she otherwise will not meet.

Thank you for the time you

have taken to read this letter. We know, because of your honest heart and good reputation, you will make the right decision. We are praying for such. Please, make the

needed corrections!

Sincerely,  
Concerned brethren  
--P.O. Box 15, Livingston,  
Al 35470.

## Younger Preachers

**Bobby Key**

It would be wise for those who are beginning their career to give attention to their latter days. Be careful with your finances. Don't spend all you earn; put some away for future needs. Stay out of debt. Pay your bills on time. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Never become obsessed with material things. The Lord

deplores greed and the love of money in his servants. The love of money and love for the Lord do not often abide in the same heart and never dwell together long in any heart.

God demands that His servants maintain purity. Avoid bad habits; "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11). The Lord requires

preachers of the gospel to be examples. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, impurity" (I Timothy 4:12). Live the way you preach!

Be a student. Study everything that may be helpful to your work, but above all else study the sacred Scriptures. "Meditate upon these things; give

thyself wholly to them. . . take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, continue in them." Do your best every time you preach.

Let me urge you to memorize many verses of Scripture. Learn to locate them readily, and quote them accurately. Avoid the habit of talking about yourself. Be careful about praising yourself. Egotism has no

place in the life of a gospel preacher. Listeners are seldom impressed with a man who is full of himself.

Develop a fervent prayer life. Remember your calling, and "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

Never neglect your family. It is a tragedy to save others, and lose your own.

### Abortion

We are killing off America's pilots, draftsmen, engineers, civic leaders, church leaders, doctors, nurses, dentists, etc. . . America is being undermined! Statistics from a Pro-life friend:

- Every 20 seconds a baby is aborted!
- 180 abortions are done every hour!
- 4,320 abortions every day!
- 30,240 every week!
- 129,600 every month!
- 1,567,800 are aborted every year!

- At least 24 million babies have died from legal abortion since 1973!
- 120,000 late abortions (from the beginning of the fourth month to the end of the ninth month) every year in the U.S.
- 7,500 serious complications annually from abortion.

**Words Of Truth  
Lectureship  
Sept. 30 - Oct. 3, 1994  
Watch For Details!**

August 26, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Healthy Communication In Marriage
- "For We Have Sinned"
- "Preacheritis"
- Preaching The Word Of God
- "Sincerity About Doctrine?"
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 30 Number 35  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

## The Concerns Of Christ John 4

**Winfred Clark**

One does not read any chapter of the Bible in which Jesus is found, without seeing and sensing his deep concern. He was on a very serious mission to this earth and he did not have time to waste. We find his concerns expressed in a number of things that are his concerns even in our day. They will help us to better understand the Son of God and to more clearly see our responsibilities as his followers. Those who travel with him through the events of John 4 will surely more fully understand the nature of the Son of God.

**1. HIS CONCERN ABOUT KNOWLEDGE**

This is seen in the Lord's response to the woman who came to draw water from the well (John 4:7). When he asked for a drink she was shocked that Jesus would speak to her, but his response was, "If thou knowest 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). Jesus was concerned about what this woman did not know. What she did not know limited her in what she would do. He took the time to inform her of who He was. He lead her by teaching to the point where He could say, "I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4:26).

The very nature of the great commission shows a concern about the right kind

of knowledge. Does not our Lord say, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, (Matthew 28:18)?" Does this not imply that knowledge is imparted by teaching? That Jesus would send these men to teach implies his concern for men knowing what they need to know about the Son of God.

**2. HIS CONCERN ABOUT MORALITY.**

This is seen in the statement our Lord made to this woman about a husband. Jesus let her know that he knew her state for he said, "Go call thy husband" (John 4:16).

Her response was, "I have no husband" (John 4:17).

Jesus said, "Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband" (John 4:18). Here is evident concern expressed by our Lord about this woman's immorality. He would not pass over it as though it did not exist. He would not treat it in some flippant fashion. He brought her face to face with the facts of her life and when she saw his knowledge she later said, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did" (John 4:29). She came to know that she could not hide her sinful state of affairs from the Son of God.

**3. HIS CONCERN ABOUT WORSHIP.**

As the conversation between Christ and the woman progressed, she

brought up the subject of worship. She spoke of the worship of the Samaritans (John 4:20). She was also aware of the worship of the Jews in Jerusalem (John 4:20). Jesus let her know the truth about the matter of worship, for he was concerned about worship.

Notice what Jesus had to say about worship: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). In this language our Lord spelled out the parameters of worship. He showed his worship. He is not only concerned about the fact of worship, and the must of worship, He is also concerned about the One to be worshipped. He said, "they that worship him" (John 4:24). God is the One that is to be worshipped. He is the one to be glorified and honored.

Jesus is also concerned about the attitude one has in worship. Such is not to be approached in an insincere or casual way.

He is concerned about one following the proper course of action. It is to be "in truth" and that is according to the truth. Such is spelled out in the word of the Lord and we cannot allow ourselves to think that we can do just anything in worship. Our practices must be taught in the word of truth and must be in harmony with the truth. If we do not show this sort of concern, we do not show the concern that we find shown by the Son of God.

**4. HIS CONCERN ABOUT GOD'S WILL.** When the disciples returned from the village, they asked the Lord to eat. His response was, "I have meat to eat that you know not, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:32, 34). The first priority of Jesus was always the will of God. That was the first thing that was in the mind of Jesus. It came before food, sleep or other matters. The will of God was supreme and He was concerned about doing his Father's will.

**5. HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE LOST STATE OF MAN.**

The very fact that Jesus spent the time that He did with this woman shows His concern for the lost. Here was one single soul that was lost and He was concerned. Some of the greatest truths that we

find coming from His lips were spoken to this lady. But such was not wasted! Her soul was precious in the sight of Jesus for He was concerned about her lost condition.

Take note of what he said to the apostles about the crowds coming out of the village: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest" (John 4:35). Here are all kinds of opportunities to reach lost people, and that is the way our Lord saw them. He was concerned enough about the lost to die for them. That is the measure of his concern.

Yes, John 4 shows a number of concerns our Lord had. May they also become ours.

**--Don't Miss--**

**The Words Of Truth**

**Lectureship '94**

**September 30 - October 2**

**Theme: Holding To Sound Doctrine (II Timothy 1:13)**

**Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ  
Jasper, Alabama**

**Featured speakers include: Winford Claiborne, B. J. Clarke, Gary Colley Sr., Bobby Duncan, Flavil Nichols, Ralph Gilmore, Tom Holland, Don McWhorter, Jane McWhorter, and Joseph Meador.**

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Healthy Communication In Marriage

Glenn Colley

Does God's word teach husbands and wives to work at having healthy communication with one another?

A good friend and brother of mine recently mentioned that he was preparing a lesson on communication between husbands and wives. As we discussed the passages from the Bible relative to marriage and the home, we thought of two in particular which teach the importance of warm healthy communication between marriage partners.

The first is I Peter 3:7 which says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Now consider "dwell with them according to knowledge." Implied in these few words is a command and a journey of adventure, pain, and happiness, which takes a lifetime to fulfill. It implies something we realized soon in life -- that men and women are different. For a man to be well educated in the knowledge of his wife is not always easy. She doesn't feel and think like he does. Her emotional makeup is different.

How then will the Christian husband fulfill this command? He must

make it his business to be a good communicator with his spouse. God made her with the need for communication, and then commanded him to learn all about her. How many wives have bemoaned the fact that their husbands won't talk to them? Husbands, you must work to communicate with your spouse because she needs you, and because God's word commands you to dwell with her according to knowledge.

The second passage is Titus 2:3-5, which says that the "aged women" are to teach the "young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Don't we need this passage desperately in America today? Volumes could be preached from this one passage!

Notice that the women are commanded to "Love their husbands." The English reading alone here would suggest that the wife should work to communicate well with her husband. However, the Greek word becomes even more interesting. It is "Philandros," which comes from a word meaning "To love, to be friendly to one." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, 5362) Simply put, the wife is to be her husband's closest friend!

In his book "His

Needs, Her Needs," William Harley lists five greatest needs for husbands, and five for wives. Included in the husband's needs is the need for his wife to be a recreational companion. Married couples should work toward finding good recreational activities, which both enjoy, and do them together. Wives are commanded in the scriptures to be friends to their husbands, and that naturally implies communication. She cannot fulfill this command without a dedicated effort to communicate.

Perhaps we would consider the importance of communication in marriage to be obvious. It is not. It constitutes one of the major causes of marital break-down in America.

We need to go back to the Bible. The Lord has always been the best "Marriage Counselor" known to man.

Incidentally, this subject should be added to our list of reasons why Christians should marry Christians. Any Christian man or woman who cannot comfortably discuss and share the joys of Christ with their spouse is sadly handicapped. Furthermore, the day-in-day-out communication between two Christian mates will no doubt make it easier for both to one day see the pearly gates.

# "For We Have Sinned"

Neal Pollard

How many people, solicited for help, turned Sam Walton down? He probably offered stock for start-up cash, their investment in the future. He had an idea, needed help, but promised rewarding dividends. Those who had faith in Mr. Walton had a long wait, but soon saw the fortune he vowed. Those who turned him away probably forgot about him until his franchise, Wal-Mart, was the top grossing retailer in America. Undoubtedly many tried to get in on his prosperity too late.

Such a mistake as a bad financial decision can smart, but it cannot begin to compare with the mistake Israel made in Numbers 13 and 14. Who does not recall the story of the twelve spies, when only Joshua and Caleb returned with a positive report? The ten doubting spies drew the people away from the Lord and the nation's murmuring became a deafening roar against the divine plan for taking Canaan. What was the price for their faithlessness and rebellion? Everyone over the age of twenty, save Caleb (14:24) and Joshua (14:30), would have their carcasses fall in the wilderness (14:29). The ten rebellious spies died immediately (14:36-37).

The result of Israel's mistake and God's ensuing

judgement was national mourning (14:39). With the stench of death from ten of their highest leaders in their nostrils and the fear of a doomed future pounding in their hearts, the people were now ready to submit to the Lord. They ascended the mountain and eagerly reported, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned!" (14:40). In Moses' reply, Israel learned the high price attached to sinning against God (14:39-45).

SIN IS THE SOURCE OF SORROW (39). "The people mourned greatly." Why? Their lack of faith was sin, which led to divine punishment. Plato said, "sin is disease, deformity, weakness." Ask a woman who has mutilated her body through abortion. Ask the homosexual whose body is withering from AIDS. Ask the alcoholic, whose liver is eaten with disease. Are these happy with their sin? James tells certain sinners to "weep and howl" for eternal miseries their sins were producing (James 5:1-6). David's sins brought tears to his eyes (cf. Psalm 51). The sin of greed caused the rich young ruler sorrow (cf. Matthew 19:22).

SIN IS TRANSGRESSION OF THE LORD'S  
Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# "Preacheritis"

## Johnny Ramsey

A study of the third chapter of I Corinthians ought to be necessary, required reading for all brethren who preach. Through the years a lot of damage to the cause of Christ has been the result of men who thought more highly of themselves than they should. One of the most foolish things brethren can do is to pit favorite preachers against other servants of God who also labor in the vineyard of the Lord. The church in Corinth, many centuries ago, was guilty of this shallow exercise in human wisdom. The party spirit has always been cultivated by Satan and is a plague in our midst even today. Preachers who encourage such action in order to feather their own nests are most unwise and

weak. Historians tell us that major streets in ancient Corinth had been named for famous orators. This esteem of public speakers carried over into the body of Christ and brought division (I Corinthians 1:10-13). Paul, inspired to write by the Holy spirit (2:13), sternly rebuked such sectarian strife and let it be known that belonging to Christ ought to be enough for any saint. Since we all (Paul, Peter, Apollos) belong to the Savior we find our center of gravity in Him was the great apostles argument. It is even so today. Every Christian elevates the Redeemer and we each serve one another. Individual talents must be used, lovingly, to build up the body of the Lord (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:1-5; I Peter 4:11). We do

damage to the church when we build cliques around men. The clergy-laity concept of denominational structure is man's invention rather than divine mandate (I Peter 2:9). Each servant of Jesus, utilizing his own talent (Matthew 25) glorifies God. Oh, how we need this lesson!

"We share our mutual woes  
Our mutual burdens bear  
And often for each other  
flows  
A sympathizing tear."

In the balance of the third stanza of I Corinthians the writer sets forth how imperative it is that we build solidly upon Christ, the one and only foundation (3:11). We must take heed to build well and solidly. For, regardless of how sincerely we try there will be human failure. Some of the material

will not endure. Sadly, some folk just do not stick to the loyalty that is so essential to success in heavenly matters. How it grieves us when folk return to the beggarly elements of the world (Galatians 4) or to the pollutions from whence they were once delivered (II Peter 2:21).

"O for a faith that will not shrink

Though pressed by every foe

That will not tremble on the brink

Of any earthly woe."

Christians must not allow envy, strife, pride or schism to deter them from being God's building, heaven's husbandry, for being laborers together with the Almighty is a high compliment. We must take heed how we build! May

we never glory in men but in the living God. May it always remain in our memory that we form the temple of Jehovah and as living stones built upon the solid foundation of Christ Jesus we are a spiritual habitation of God. Noble words ring out this brilliant third chapter of the first Corinthian epistle . . .

"And you belong to Christ." Let us, therefore, put forever out of our lives the insidious sin of "preacheritis" for we all belong to one another because of the love of the Father found in His beloved Son!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus  
Sweetest name I know  
Fills my every longing  
Keeps me singing as I go."

## 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 meting 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. And 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

Continued On Page 4

## "Sincerity About Doctrine?"

### Mike Benson

Dear Mike,  
"I've noticed that you stress doctrine in your weekly articles. Is doctrine really all that important? Shouldn't we be more concerned about our relationship to God and being sincere, rather than putting so much emphasis on what we believe?"

Several passages of scripture come to mind as I consider your question. Please study the following carefully:

1. Sincerity is important. Paul wrote, "that you may approve the things excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:10). See also Ephesians 6:24. Recognize however, that it is possible for an individual to be very sincere -- but to be sincerely wrong. Saul of Tarsus is a prime example. He was a sincere man with a clear conscience (Acts 23:1), who felt that it was his duty to persecute Christians (Acts

26:9-11). He later learned that he was wrong, even in his sincerity (I Timothy 1:13-15).

I was recently told that a close friend had been injured in an automobile accident. I had no reason to doubt this message nor the person who shared the information with me. The next day I learned that my friend had not been in an accident, but that he was in the hospital due to an illness. For several hours I

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

### Glenn Colley

In any given day, how many choices do you make? Well, if you include in that list even the small choices, the number may be in the hundreds!

Think with me for a minute about the really big choices we make in life -- you know, choices about who we will marry, how we will make our living, how we will raise our kids, and of course, the choice about what the underlying standards we will use to govern our lives by. Now, that's the biggest choice of all, because it affects all other choices. A great leader of Israel named Joshua once said, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve . . ." (Joshua 24:15). And then he concluded, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Now, we may not be able to influence the people around us to make the choices we wish them to, but we do have the privilege to make choices for ourselves. Have you decided to live as a Christian? It's the right choice.

## "For We Have Sinned"

Continued From Page 2  
**COMMANDMENT (41).** Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord?" Their present sin was their attempt to take the land which God said was now off-limits to them. While He wanted them to go before, now God wanted disobedient Israel to wander in the wilderness. Their formation on the mountain top was transgression of the Lord's command. So, too, all sin is a breaking of God's law (cf. I John 3:4).

**SIN IS AN UNPROSPEROUS PROPOSITION (41).** Seeing Israel's preparation to take Canaan, Moses warned, "... This will not succeed." Sin deceives. That is why so many do what is so wrong. It looks good, it feels good, so it must be good

(cf. I John 2:15-17). Sin is spiritual pestilence (Romans 3:23). Sin is spiritual privation (cf. James 4:4). Sin is spiritual poison (Romans 6:23). But, sin is never spiritual prosperity!!

**SIN IS GOD-LESS ACTIVITY (42).** Moses warned the people that "the Lord" was "not among" them. Anything we wish to do that we would not want God to see us doing is, it is safe to say, sin. Anything we wear, anywhere we go, and anyone we choose as companion and mate must be such that we know God approves.

**SIN IS DEFEATING (43, 45).** While we can do all with divine assistance (cf. Philippians 4:13), what can we hope to do without the Lord? Moses said, "... The Lord will not be with you."

They decided to go toward Canaan anyway, only to be attacked and driven back by the Amalekites and Canaanites (45). When before they decided they could not do God's will with God's help, now they figured they could do their own will without God's help. What happened? They were defeated. Even if we gain the whole world, if we lose our own souls we have suffered utter defeat (cf. Matthew 16:26).

**SIN IS PRESUMPTUOUS (44).** The prelude to their defeat was their presumption. Deuteronomy 1:43-45 gives the rest of the story. They willfully sinned, were chased and driven back, and came back to Kadesh weeping before the Lord. The price for presumptuous sin under the

Law of Moses was indeed high for the Old Law declared, "Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil person from Israel" (Deuteronomy 17:12). The false teachers in the New Testament were labeled "presumptuous and self-willed" individuals who respected nothing but their own lust (II Peter 2:10). Willful sin, for those who have obeyed the truth, is not covered by the blood of Christ unless one repents of it (Hebrews 10:26).

**SIN IS A DEPARTURE FROM GOD (44).** When Israel took to the mountain, "the ark of the covenant of

the Lord [and] Moses" stayed back in the camp. When one decides to sin, he decides to leave God (Isaiah 59:1-2). One cannot walk with God and run with the devil (cf. Matthew 6:24). No wonder Christ calls sin the "far country" (cf. Matthew 15:13).

Remember Silesius' lament, that "Sin is nothing but turning from God one's face and having turned it thus, turning it toward death." The faithful child of God strives to live the words of John, who said, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" (I John 3:9).

## Preaching The Word Of God

Continued From Page 3  
 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 11:40). It is perfect (Psalm 19:7). It is enduring (Luke 21:33). 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. 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!

## "Sincerity Above Doctrine?"

Continued From Page 3  
 sincerely believed that my friend had been hurt in an accident, but I was mistaken. Regardless of how sure or sincere I was about the incident, I was wrong. What is the point? Simply that sincerity is important (in fact, we cannot be saved without it), but it must not be held in higher regard than truth!

2. Doctrine is important. We

are told to give attendance to doctrine (I Timothy 4:13), to take heed to doctrine (I Timothy 4:16) to labor in doctrine (I Timothy 5:17), and to "speak the things which are proper for sound (healthy) doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Doctrine is important! Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine . . ." (II Timothy 3:16).

3. We must be sincere as well as doctrinally accurate in order to be pleasing to God. John wrote, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet

him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (II John 9-11). Jesus Himself taught, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many

wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness' (Matthew 7:21-23). Could Jesus say, "Depart from me" even if we are sincere and say, "Lord, Lord" and do many good works? What does the Bible say?

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.

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### Smile Awhile

A mother heard her young son screaming and rushed to him. She discovered that his two-year-old sister had grabbed his hair with both hands and was not letting go. The mother

pried the little girl's hands loose, along with a bit of hair!

She said to her son, "Now try to understand; she's little and doesn't know it hurts to have your hair pulled.

The mother had barely left the room

when she heard an even louder scream, this time from the little sister. Rushing back in, she yelled, "What happened?" "She knows now," her little brother declared.

Selected

September 2, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Suggestions For "Back To School"
- Kow-Towing Christians
- What Is The Church Of Christ?
- Some Weaken The Church
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 30 Number 36  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

## "What Is Man?" (No.

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

We now begin a five-part study of a question appearing in both Testaments -- "What Is Man?" We read in Psalm 8:4, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" This vital query is repeated again in precious Psalms. We read in Psalm 144:3, "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!" This question occurs once in the New Testament and is a direct reference to its being asked in the book of Psalms. We read in Hebrews 2:6, "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The very fact that this question is asked a number of times in Holy

Writ, (and I have not listed all its occurrences), underscores its importance. It is eminently worthy of our close contemplation.

Modern man faces some great problems, some perplexing questions. They include such probing queries as, "Who am I? Am I a real person? Am I just a product of aimless and purposeless evolution that did not have me in mind in the first place? Am I just matter in motion? Is the only difference between me and a mouse just in the arrangement of molecules as one evolutionist has described the matter? Is there a God above me, a purpose before me and another life beyond this current one? Is there real meaning to life? If so, what is it and wherein can it be found for me? What, basically, is

the nature of this creature called man?"

Millions have gone in for drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages, immorality, pleasures at any cost and in all varieties, materialism etc. Someone has misled them totally. In view of the deceived and deluded information they have unfortunately received, they have concluded already that the very purpose of life is self-indulgence. They are here "to do their own thing." They are here to receive every kick of life that sin has in store for them. They are here to follow the Satanic philosophy, "If it feels good, do it!" About the kindest thing that can be said for such a perilous philosophy is that it is stupid to the nth degree and then some!!

Modern man is trying to

find happiness in popularity. But it is not there. Modern man is trying to find meaning in life in the possession of vast amounts of money and earthly possessions. But it is not to be found in such. Modern man is trying to find happiness in carnal conquests. AIDS can be found in such but not genuine felicity. Modern man is trying to find contentment in life in power and prestige and again it is not there. Modern man is trying to find happiness in his booze and the lethal drugs on which he fixes daily attention and to which he soon is helplessly, hopelessly and haplessly addicted. But it is not there. Modern man is trying to find meaning by earthly knowledge and worldly wisdom. It just is not there! Solomon, three thousand years ago, sought to

in these same areas. Over them all, with NO exceptions, he wrote, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). This is what he wrote initially in this book of quests. In the next chapter he wrote, "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 2:17). For a surety, modern man will not find what eluded Solomon in his quest for what is good for them to do.

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

## The Spirit Of Brotherhood

**Winfred Clark**

I am convinced, and I believe there are hundreds of others, who also believe that there MUST be a recovery of the "spirit of Brotherhood." One does not have to be a microscopic observer to see that such a spirit is lacking in so many quarters. It is also very obvious that the lack of such breeds dreadful consequences. In view of this we cannot stand aside and act as if such will merely run its course and then all will be

well. Not so. We are dealing with something that can destroy.

I know that there are those who will view any appeal for brotherhood as an effort to compromise. That is most unfortunate and I hope this study will prove this to be the case. We MUST not allow ourselves to be muted concerning this because of some misinterpretation placed upon what might be said. Let's consider this thing called "brotherhood."

### 1. There Is A Brotherhood.

I know we only find the word one time in the New Testament. Peter placed it in the midst of some demanding statements when he said, "love the brotherhood (I Peter 2:17)." He did not stop to try to explain what the brotherhood really was. He implied that they would know. They understood this to be those who made up the church. It was made up of those who were brethren. When we speak of our

brethren we are speaking of the brotherhood. These are people who have obeyed the same truth and in so doing have purified their souls (I Peter 1:22). These are the ones who have been begotten again (I Peter 1:23). These are those people who are seen as "a royal priesthood a holy nation, a people for God's own possession," (I Peter 2:9). These are people who have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). These

make up the brotherhood.

I believe that such exists today. There are people in the world who have done the very things that Peter describes these as having done. If those made up the brotherhood then, they will do so now. This we need to understand. This is the way we must see our brethren. These constitute the brotherhood.

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Suggestions For "Back To School"

### Part 1: Advice To Parents

Glenn Colley

All good parents experience the "empty nest" syndrome, especially with those innocent little kindergarteners and those independent college-bound enthusiasts. For *this* generation of parents however, there are other concerns. We live in a new and evolving world regarding education. Prayer is out. Evangelism is harassment. Teachers who teach the truth about our origin could be breaking the law. Some of the students and some of the curriculum advocates sex without moral restraints.

Christian parents face a contest for the hearts of their children. Will the Christian truths we have taught them be cemented in their character so tightly that the world won't be able to tear them out? Perhaps it was with similar thoughts in mind that David said to his son Solomon, "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever."

Parents, ponder and practice these important suggestions:

#### 1. Pray for your children.

No matter what their age, pray for yourself and for your children. They need to hear you pray in clear terms for their spiritual health. Pray for their future mates, whoever they are, that they are

being reared by godly parents to be faithful Christians. A teenager who knows that his mom and dad pray for him every day will have a easier time resisting the many temptations to sin.

#### 2. Keep the things of the Lord in top priority.

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33)." Without question, this school year will offer times when it will be easy to miss the worship assembly or Bible classes for school studies or recreational activities. Young people, who have been taught a clear sense of priorities, will have an easier time setting priorities for service to God in the future. On the other hand, those reared to miss these assemblies when something at school comes up, will grow up with a confused sense of priorities.

#### 3. Determine to maintain a Christian home free from conscious sin.

There's a world of sin out there. Your child or teen will be faced with people from all segments of society. Sometimes they may feel that the sinful ways of the world are so big that there is simply no escape. Then, there is home. Make sure that your home is ALWAYS a refuge from the world and not just living quarters which sometimes conforms to the world. One mother spoke of her teenage daughter bringing home R-rated movies for she and her friends to watch. The mother said, "My husband and I can't stand it. We go in another room."

Joshua still encourages

Christian parents today: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)." May your children never have to question the fact that "home is a place where Jesus lives."

#### 4. Spend time with your children.

We live such fast lives. We live like an ambulance; sirens screaming, tires peeling, always headed from one emergency to another. But children don't wait. They come in what may be the busiest time of our lives and demand our time. Our values must be with them. Parents cannot teach the things of God to their children without spending much time with those children. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 6:6, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Play with them. Pray with them. Use the life about them to teach them lessons about God. Fill their lives, and yours, with Jesus. Make the service of God such a deeply rooted part of their lives that they won't be able to imagine life without Him. Take the time.

Part two, next week, will focus on "Back to school" suggestions for students.

# Kow-Towing Christians

Keith McNeely

Kow-tow means to respond in subservience marked by fawning attentiveness. It is the idea of living in deference or docile submission. We are not talking about cow-bells, cow-birds, cow-boys or cow-catchers but rather kow-towing. Too often Christians are willing to kow-tow. That is, they are too willing to bow down to threats to our spiritual lives, readily complying to the wicked ways of the world. Some of these threats Christians bend to include self-centered whims, pressures of society and the pressures of our self-serving friends and family members.

In numerous passages of scripture the Bible urges taking the right path in life.

"And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way: but let it rather be healed" (Hebrews 12:13). This text urges us to responsibly set ourselves on the straight path, and reminds us that following the other way is the lame way. Wisdom, one of the principle speakers (by personification) in Proverbs reminds us "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths (Proverbs 4:11). By reading we can know the many benefits of following right paths; "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). These and many other passages show

Continued On Page 4

--Don't Miss--

The Words Of Truth  
Lectureship '94

September 30 - October 2

Theme: Holding To Sound  
Doctrine (II Timothy 1:13)

Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ  
Jasper, Alabama

Featured speakers include: Winford Claiborne, B. J. Clarke, Gary Colley Sr., Bobby Duncan, Flavil Nichols, Ralph Gilmore, Tom Holland, Don McWhorter, Jane McWhorter, and Joseph Meador.



The  
Words Of  
Truth

(USPS 691-760)

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# What Is The Church Of Christ?

W. A. Holley

**(1) It is not a denomination.** The word "denomination" means, "An act of denominating, name, designation, especially a general name for a category; a religious organization uniting in a single legal and administrative body a number of local congregations." For example a denomination is "a part of the whole, as the \$1, or \$5, or \$10 denominations of the United States currency."

The church of Christ as presented in the Sacred Narrative, is not a *part* of any thing -- it is the whole thing. Remember, Jesus established His church long before the rise of either Roman Catholicism or Protestant denominationalism. Verily, denominationalism is a bundle of contradictions: Teaching different faiths, different systems of church government, different names and creeds, different methods of worship, different terms of membership. Truly, what would make one a member of a certain denominational church would not and could not make him a member of all denominational churches.

**(2) It is not the church building,** although it might have cost \$10,000,000. Rather, the church building is only the place where the church meets or assembles. Somehow, some have the notion the church building is sacred and is to be venerated.

The tabernacle and the temple were sacred and holy; thus, they were not to be profaned, but the church of Christ is not such a building. The church of Christ is a spiritual building (I Peter 2:5-9). The church building was not purchased by the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; I Peter 1:17-19).

**(3) It includes all who have been called out of the world into the body of Christ,** which is His church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24; Ephesians 4:1-6). Jesus is the head of all things pertaining to the church, which is guided and directed by the Holy Spirit through the word of God or the gospel of Christ.

**(4) It belongs to Christ.** Jesus established His own church or kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19). He is the chief corner-stone over which many stumbled and still stumble even until this day (Isaiah 28:16; Ephesians 2:20; I Peter 2:6-9). Thus, the church of Christ was not founded upon John the Baptist, the Apostle Peter, or any other human being.

What are the terms of membership of the church of Christ as prescribed in the New Testament? They are (1) faith, (John 3:16; Romans 5:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-9); (2) repentance, (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31); (3) the confession of Jesus' name before men, (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10); (4)

baptism, (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). To sum up these verses, to be saved, the sinner must believe, repent, confess Jesus Christ, and be baptized into Christ (Psalm 139:17). Hence, all who believe and obey the gospel of Christ are added by the Lord to His Church (Acts 2:36-38, 47).

The doctrine of salvation by grace only, or salvation by faith only is not taught in your Bible (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:14-26). It is the faith that obeys that saves sinners (Acts 27:25; Hebrews 5:8-9).

**(5) It owes its allegiance to but one book -- the Holy Bible.** The church of Christ has no human creeds, no human manuals, no human catechisms, no human books of discipline. It is a sin to add to or to take from God's holy and divine revelation (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19).

**(6) It seeks to worship God** exactly and precisely as God ordered worship to be addressed to Him. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24, ASV). Thus, for worship to be acceptable, it must be directed to God, offered in the right attitude and from proper motives, all in harmony with the divine will of God as expressed in the Holy Bible. According to

God's revealed will there are certain special acts of worship in which we must engage: Bible study, praying, the Lord's Supper, singing Scriptural songs, and giving to support the Lord's work (Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 5:19). Also involved is the *first* day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-26). Hence, God has prescribed what He wants and we have no right to change it. Pageantry, choirs, quartets, dancing, and the like, are all excluded when God's authority is respected (Colossians 3:16-17). We do not worship to please ourselves nor our friends, but worship to please God Almighty (Revelation 22:9).

**(7) Today it is pleading for the restoration of primitive Christianity** as established on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, A.D. 33. We urge the unity of all true believers so that we may help answer the prayer of Jesus Christ himself: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the

world may know that thou didst send me, and lovest them, even as thou lovest me" (John 17:20-23, ASV).

Religious division, whether Catholic or Protestant, flies into the very face of Jesus Christ, for these religious movements promote the very opposite of what Jesus prayed for. Have you ever heard a so-called gospel preacher say, "I thank God for religious division that we may have a church of our choice?" How ridiculous in the light of Jesus' prayer for unity.

In the truest sense the church of Christ is neither Catholic nor Protestant. The church of Christ is not controlled by any state or national association, or synod, or conference, or ecclesiastical hierarchy.

What is the secret of reproducing the Apostolic Church in the last years of the 20th century? Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). When the same seed is sown today, it will produce the same fruit which it produced in the first century of Christianity (Galatians 6:7-9). These words are for those who truly want to know the truth (John 8:30-32).

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

## Some Weaken The Church

Bobby Key

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Timothy 2:19). The strength of the church lies in the founder and in her foundation. We "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed

together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:20-22).

The weakness of the church lies in her human elements. If the church is weak that means the members are weak. The church is always made weak by members who are uninformed. The Christian can only grow in proportion to his diet. "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2).

The Christian who has no desire for the Word of God becomes weak and sickly. Spiritual truth falls on deaf ears that have neither life or knowledge. No church will grow and prosper with a building full of uninformed members.

The non-supporting member contributes to its weakness. The strength of the church can be found in its active members, those who are

Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

What would you say is the most profound thought that one's mind can entertain? Birth? Love? Life's brevity?

Let me suggest that the most profound thought centers on eternity. Can there be a more sobering or unsettling reality than this?

One man "sorted it out" this way: "High up in the North, in the land called Svithjod, there stands a rock. It is 100 miles high and 100 miles wide. Once every 1000 years a little bird comes to this rock to sharpen its beak. When the rock has thus been worn away, then a single day of eternity will have gone by."

Thinking of eternity can boggle your mind very quickly. I suggest we spend our time then not considering the length of eternity, but where we'll be living throughout it.

Are you living prepared for heaven? Matthew 25:32 says, "And before Him shall be gathered all nations and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

# The Spirit Of Brotherhood

Continued From Page 1

## 2. "Love" is the spirit of Brotherhood.

One can make this statement without fear of contradiction. This is what Peter is talking about when he says, "love the brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17). We find this sort of an admonition over and over in the writing of John. John writes, "We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:13). John goes on to say, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth" (I John 3:18). We would have no doubt about the fact that "love" and "love indeed" is the spirit that must dominate the brotherhood. All of us know that these people have their weaknesses and failures, just as we all do. They all need the benefits of the blood of Jesus (I John 1:7-9). But they would still be seen as brethren and as those who are to be the

objects of love.

When the "spirit of brotherhood" is present, what will be found? Can we find examples where this spirit prevailed? I believe we can.

One case would surely be with Abraham of old. It is found where strife arose between the herdsmen of Lot and the herdsmen of Abraham (Genesis 13). Here you would and could have one side pitted against the other. Such could surely produce suspicions and envy. But notice the "spirit of brotherhood" that was manifested by Abraham. He came to Lot saying, "let there be not strife, I pray thee, between me and thee and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren" (Genesis 13:8). Notice that Abraham made his appeal on the basis that they were brethren. That means that those who are brethren will approach a problem in a particular way. They will not approach one

with suspicion and evil surmising. There will be the matter of equal respect. You will notice that Abraham comes with a plan for peace. He is one who "follows after things which make for peace" (Romans 14:19). He said, "Is not the whole land before thee?" (Genesis 13:9). Abraham saw there was more territory than that which was being contested. He knew there was a way to solve the problem if people wanted to do so.

There is something interesting in the "spirit of brotherhood" seen in Abraham. He did not come to the problem with one ounce of ego or selfishness. He was not thinking of himself, but of the cause of God. His motive was first and foremost to please God. I doubt very seriously that he would care who received the credit if the problem could be solved. He was not out to gain a personal victory. He wanted to do what was right. He could and

would surrender something that might be attractive to him for the sake of peace. No, this does not involve a matter of doctrine, but a matter of judgment. This could have become an ugly mess if the "spirit of brotherhood" had not prevailed.

The "spirit of brotherhood" prevailed when a dispute arose among the disciples in Acts 6. In this case the Grecian Jews in the church, murmured against the Hebrew Jews because their widows were being neglected (Acts 6:1). Here you have the making of a real division. But the "spirit of brotherhood" prevailed. First, it is seen in the conduct of the apostles. They did not feel insulted, but rather called the multitude unto themselves. They tried to keep open the doors of communication. They brought all the parties into the solution. That gave them a way to solve the problem if they wanted to do

so, and they surely wanted to. They were told to look for seven men, a certain kind of men (Acts 6:3). They chose these men and we are told that all of these were Grecian. But remember, the Grecians were the ones who felt they had a problem. So the Hebrew Jews went overboard to be sure to remove the possible objection that they were seeking to take advantage of brethren. This would surely be a case of men "not looking on their own things but upon the things of others (Philippians 2:4)." That is the "spirit of brotherhood." Such a spirit settled the problem in Jerusalem and I am persuaded that such a spirit will go far in settling most of the difficulties we face in our own day.

When we reach the point where we had rather serve one another than to strive against one another, we will have found that spirit.

## Kow-Towing Christians

Continued From Page 2

that God desires us to diligently seek and follow His ways. Sadly, His people have in various times through history, been willing to kow-tow. They bow down to the ways of things rather than His ways.

Ambition is a word that is not normally associated with Christianity, but it is a good word. We need to have a holy desire. That is, our targets in this spiritual life ought to be sought with the same fervor and zeal as our physical targets. Failure of our spiritual ardor characterizes kow-towing Christians. Paul taught us "So run that ye may

obtain" the Christian prize, Heaven (I Corinthians 9:24). By inspiration he urges us to be mindful of how we run the race. We conclude from this that it is not enough to slack back to the "also ran" category in Christianity. Strangely he urged his first century counterparts to "covet and desire spiritual gifts" (II Corinthians 12:31; 14:1). Today we no longer have these same spiritual gifts available to us, but we can learn and implement the same words in our spiritual lives -- Covet and desire. Thereby we show our holy ambition.

"Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the

people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" (Numbers 14:9). Here Joshua and Caleb show godly ambition to the bone. They remind us that failure to seek God's objective is to "rebel." They refer to the enemy as "bread," that is a common meal for God's army. Be ambitious, live the Christian life with intentions and purpose.

Many pictures are seen daily of kow-towing Christians. Paul wrote, "Evil communications corrupt good manners (morals ASV), (I Corinthians 15:33)." We see family and

friends visit in homes of members of the Lord's church, and when it comes time to leave for worship, our brethren kow-tow to peer pressure.

Next, think of one of the devices of Satan "Ye are of your father the devil. . . for he is a liar, and the father of it, (John 8:44)." We see too many willing to lie rather than bear the burden that truth telling may bring. Again, kow-towing to devilish devices.

Set yourselves spiritually to have the "back bone of a saw log." Ezekiel envisioned beings that were willing. He said, "Every one went straight

forward: whither the spirit was to go (Ezekiel 1:12)." Paul summarized the idea in one great verse, "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13, 14)."

"One thing" thinking demands we forget the past and push forward for the prize (goal ASV). **DO NOT BE GUILTY OF BEING A K O W - T O W I N G CHRISTIAN.**

--P.O. Box 222, Brilliant, AL 35548.

## Some Weaken The Church

Continued From Page 3

willing to invest their time, energy and money. A membership not willing to give of their financial means weakens the church.

The member who lives an ungodly life weakens the

church. This type of member blocks the door for others to enter. He is a hypocrite and stumbling block and a rock of offense. Those who will not live for the Lord speak so loudly by their lives that the world will never hear the

message of the Saviour.

The church is greatly handicapped by its non-attending members. A host of these may be found in every congregation. The influence of the church suffers greatly due to the members who

never attend or seldom attend. Little progress can be made when half of the membership stays at home on Sunday and Wednesday nights. It is a shame that so many in the church of Christ take church attendance so

lightly.

Yes, the Divine side of the church is doing nicely, but the human elements can stand improvement!

--324 17th S.W., Miami, OK 74354.

September 9, 1994

**See Inside Articles:**

- Suggestions For Back To School (Part 2)
- "What Is Man?" (No. 2)
- A Monumental Chapter
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Looking Toward Home

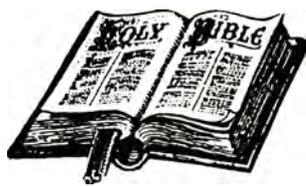
Volume 30 Number 37  
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# The Words of Truth

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

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## Words Of Truth Lectureship '94



September 30 - October 2

Director: Glenn Colley

Theme: Holding To Sound Doctrine

(II Timothy 1:13)

**FRIDAY**

9:30 - 10:15

"Pondering Eternity and Sound Doctrine"

*B. J. Clarke - Southaven, MS*

10:30 - 11:15

"Sound Doctrine Directs Our Homes"

*Gary Colley - Austin, TX*

12:45 - 1:30

"Important Ways To Maintain Sound Doctrine In The Local Church"

*Ralph Gilmore - Henderson, TN*

1:45 - 2:30

"Sound Doctrine Regarding Acceptable Worship Today"

*Winford Claiborne - Fayetteville, TN*

6:30 - 7:00

Singing

*Clifford Smith - Altoona, AL*

7:00 - 8:00

"Recognizing Christ's Church In The 90's"

*Tom Holland - Brentwood, TN*

**SATURDAY**

9:30 - 10:15

"Hold Fast The Form Of Sound Words, II Tim. 1:13"

*Flavil Nichols - Jasper, AL*

10:30 - 11:15

Divided Session: Men/Women - Sound Doctrine

"Christian Women In The 90's"

*Don and Jane McWhorter - Fayette, AL*

12:45 - 1:30

"Sound Doctrine: Our Standard For Morality In The 90's"

*Don McWhorter*

6:30 - 7:00

Singing

*Kyle Wadley - Northport, AL*

7:00 - 8:00

"Sound Doctrine Regarding Authority"

*Bobby Duncan - Adamsville, AL*

(Brother Duncan will present a Question and Answer period after his lesson).

**SUNDAY**

9:30 - 10:15 (Class)

"Sound Doctrine In Reliable Hermeneutics"

*Joseph Meador - Austin, TX*

10:30 - 11:30

"Sound Doctrine Versus Humanism"

*Joseph Meador*

THEME:  
**"HOLDING TO SOUND DOCTRINE"**  
II TIMOTHY 1:13

## Featured Speakers

**Winford Claiborne**

Presently working with the West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, TN, brother Claiborne's preaching experience spans a 50+ year period. He is also a businessman and teacher and has been a flyer for almost 39 years.



**B. J. Clarke**

A graduate of Freed-Hardeman University, brother Clarke currently preaches for the Lord's church in Southaven, MS. He is an experienced debater and currently serves as editor of "Power" magazine.



**Gary G. Colley, Sr.**

For 40 years, brother Colley has worked on radio and television, conducted numerous Gospel meetings and written several articles for brotherhood publications. He is presently with the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, TX.



**Bobby Duncan**

Brother Duncan's contributions to the spreading of the Gospel include local work with the Lord's church in Adamsville, AL, daily radio and television programs, editing two Gospel papers and conducting many Gospel meetings.



**Ralph Gilmore**

Having preached in 34 states and 13 countries, brother Gilmore now serves the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, TN. He also has 13 years of experience as a member of the Bible faculty at Freed-Hardeman University.



**Tom Holland**

More than 50 books have come from the pen of brother Holland. He has been preaching since 1949, serving congregations in four states. Currently he is involved in writing and speaking at lectureships and Gospel meetings.



**Don McWhorter**

For over 20 years brother McWhorter has faithfully served the Lord's church in Fayette, AL. He is also a speaker on an internationally syndicated radio and television program and a well known author.



**Jane McWhorter**

Sister McWhorter has contributed several superb books to the Lord's work. She is a popular speaker at Ladies' Days and was honored in 1993 when she was presented with an award naming her as "Alabama's Mother of the Year."



**Joseph Meador**

In 1993 brother Meador moved to Austin, TX to begin work as Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies. He also currently serves as associate editor of the periodical, "The Christian Worker."



**Flavil Nichols**

Sixty years ago this year brother Nichols began what has been a long and fruitful service as a Gospel preacher. He now devotes full time to preaching in Gospel meetings and other special appointments.



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon  
6th Avenue  
Church Of Christ  
Jasper, AL 35501

## Suggestions For Back To School

### Biblical Advice For Students

#### (Part 2)

Glenn Colley

The Bible mentions many youths who left home for one reason or another. The prodigal of Luke 15 left because he was "sick" of home. Joseph in Genesis 37 left home because his home was "sick" of him. David left home because he had distinguished himself as someone who could be of benefit in Saul's army.

Our children leave for school. As their parents we feel an unsettling mix of joy and anxiety, happiness and grief. We hope they will do well in life; we want them to be faithful to their Lord.

But this article is not directed to parents. It is for young people. As you begin this new school year, and particularly if you are a teenager, there are a variety of temptations which you will probably face. The time to decide how you will react to these temptations is *right now*, NOT at the time you actually face the temptation to sin. Consider some with me, and make (or re-make) some important decisions.

First, you'll face the temptation to treat sexual matters lightly. Although there have always been people in school who were loose morally, there has never been a time when our society considered itself more "open-minded" toward sinful morals. For many folks, no action is wrong sexually unless it is undesired by one of the participants.

As you come through your teenage years, you need to often remind yourself that God has placed sexual intimacy within Biblical boundaries. Following His will requires

self-discipline. We must THINK. You will perhaps be exposed to pornography this year, or to sinful encouragement, or to criticism for doing right with regard to God's will concerning sex. Focus your mind on God's word. Follow His lead. Familiarize yourself with His teachings.

Galatians 5:19-21 says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." "Fornication" simply means sinful sexual intercourse. "Lasciviousness" includes acts as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, and unchaste handling of males and females. If you have sex with anyone you aren't married to, it is a sin. If you participate in the indecent handling of another person, you sin. If you wear scanty or seductive clothing before members of the opposite sex, talk dirty, or seductively move your body (as in dancing) before the opposite sex, you sin.

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honorable before all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

Second, you will perhaps face the temptation to use mind-altering substances. Ask why some teens drink beverage alcohol or use recreational drugs and you will hear, "It's a social lubricant," or "experimentation," or, "to escape the painful realities of adolescence."

Titus 2:1-4 teaches that

people of all ages are to be sober-minded. Keeping our minds clear is a certain requirement for living the Christian life. Decisions must be made. Temptations must be countered and defeated. When we use illegal drugs or alcohol, we gradually forfeit the ability to think clearly.

Some argue that drinking a little is not specifically prohibited in the scriptures. They are overlooking some important considerations. Passages DO plainly condemn being intoxicated (Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:10). Now think: When is a person intoxicated? Who decides? You don't have to think of this long before you realize that there is no clear and certain definition. To further complicate matters, a person who drinks a certain amount of alcohol one Friday night, may drink the same amount the next Friday night and it effect him differently! There is only one completely safe definition, and that is this: A person is intoxicated when his mind, to some degree, has been effected by the drink. Since my mind will feel the effects of alcohol with the first drink, at that point I am one drink drunk.

Certainly there are other considerations. My influence is at stake, Matthew 18:6. Even those who argue that they can control their drinking will admit that they cannot control the drinking of those about them. Additionally, Romans 12:9 says, "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." When I purchase and use alcohol I

am supporting a product which in it's natural use results in more broken homes, crime, and innocent deaths than any other product.

Let's shift gears. While it is true that you will face temptations, the opposite is also true. You will be handed opportunities to do good. For example, you will have opportunities to be a Christian voice with a class audience. There will probably be times in class when current events and values are being discussed. Topics like rearing children in the '90's, homosexuality, abortion, etc., will be raised, and you can speak for the side of right. How tragic it is when moral issues are discussed in classrooms and no one is there who will speak up for Christ's position on the matter. Let no man despise your youth!

You will have the opportunity to be the kind of friend around whom it is easy to be good. Among our associates we can think of those with whom extreme care must be taken because they are wild and concerned little with what is right and good. We can

also think of individuals around whom being and doing right is easy because they respect the things of God. Be a good friend (I Corinthians 13:6).

You have the opportunity to glorify Christ at this time in your life. So often teenagers will dispute their godly parents and argue, "But I'll only be 17 once," or "I'll only be 14 once!" That's right. You will. But consider the fact that you have only one time in life to be 14 and live for Christ. You have only one 17th year to do what is right and good. Give them to Christ! May you never have to pray those bitter words as David, "Remember not the sins of my youth . . . (Psalm 25:7)."

You will have the opportunity to be an example of the believers. I Timothy 4:12 says, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers; in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity."

There are good friends in school. Good relationships. There is the joy of learning and experiencing. You can do it as a Christian!



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# "What Is Man?" (No. 2)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

Israel's Sweet Singer inquired as touching "What is man?" in Psalms 8:4 and 144:3. Patient Job of Uz does the same in Job 7:17. The sacred scribe of Hebrews gives the question a New Testament emphasis and setting in Hebrews 2:6. It is a preeminent, powerful and penetrating question of Holy Writ.

The basic nature of man is involved in a study of this query. Men en masse possess misconceptions about the nature of man. I mention briefly some of these in our current study.

(1) There is the Epicurean view of man. While in Athens on his second missionary tour Paul met with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Acts 17:18). the Epicureans possessed the playboy and playgirl spirit of their Aquarian Age. (The Age of Aquarius enjoys heyday emphasis in our lascivious times). They believed in having fun at any price. Their philosophy was "Let us eat, drink and be merry today for tomorrow we die." Paul alluded to this in I

Corinthians 15:31. It was a fatal philosophy for it led to spiritual death for all its duped devotees. Yet multitudes follow that very same philosophy today. It is nothing but a false view of man.

(2) There is the Sadducean view of man. The Sadducees were one of the two main Jewish sects in the first century. Uniformly, they are on the wrong side of truth every time they are mentioned in the New Testament. They opposed John the Baptist, Jesus, the apostles and were the initial persecutors of the early church in Acts 4:1ff. They denied man a spirit, rejected the resurrection, disbelieved in angels and said that when man died he died all over, that nothing survived his demise. They were the materialists, the modernists, the religious or theological liberals of the first century. They were looseness personified when it came to God's inviolate word. They have a large counterpart in today's religious society. The Sadducean view of man is palpably false; it is filled with

fallaciousness.

(3) There is the Evolutionary view of man. This view has him with no Maker and only the product of aimless chance and reckless time at work. Chance and time are the twin idols of organic evolution -- the popular golden calf of secular society. This system denies that man has been created by a wise and infinite God. Instead, it has man the product of aimless and purposeless evolution that did not have him in mind at all in its beginning stages. This system has man from slime -- not from the Sublime. Organic evolution has man produced from lower forms of life; he is just a bit higher up the scale of life, the ladder of evolutionary development, than monkeys, apes, lemurs, etc. The bottom line is that he really is not any more important than what produced him. This system has a NOTHING turning itself into a simple non-living something; that simple non-living something turning itself into a simple living something, and that simple living something turning

itself into enough kinds as ultimately to produce man. Organic evolution sweeps under the rug of convenience the law of biogenesis (that life comes only from life) and the law that like begets like -- not something different from the original stock. Lambs come from sheep -- not elephants; pigs come from sows -- not cows; puppies come from dogs -- not mother cats, etc.! This is a brutal and base view of marvelous man and one totally fallacious. It has NOTHING to commend it!

(4) There is the Calvinistic view of man. Calvin has man totally depraved at birth, minus any conditions by which he can be saved, only a limited atonement made for the fortunate elect with nothing done for redeeming the non-elect. The elect are merely puppets in a system of irresistible grace when it strikes. This system guarantees eternal redemption when once saves regardless of subsequent character or conduct. This, too, is a false view of man.

(5) There is the Humanistic view of man. It closely

parallels the evolutionary view of man. Its foundation is atheism pure and simple. Humanism makes man, not God, the measure of all things. It makes man into his own God. The New Agers belong to this philosophy for a surety. Humanism is sophisticated atheism. It is infidelity in a new dress. A prominent Humanist had died and lay in state as people filed by the casket. A theist remarked, "He is all dressed up with nowhere to go!" Fine clothes will not avail in Hadean punishment and ultimately eternal Gehenna! Humanism is false to the core. Yet it is the dominant philosophy of our deeply secular times. Humanists have already begun to call the twenty-first century the "Century of Humanism". To an alarming degree the twentieth century, now almost gone, has been the Century of Humanism. It has enjoyed its heyday of expansion and stunning success!

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

## A Monumental Chapter

**Johnny Ramsey**

As Jesus comes nearer the cross the Apostles need special help in preparation for the absence of Christ from their midst. The Savior bolsters their faith by informing them that Satan will be defeated by His death at Calvary (John 12:31-33). Our blessed Redeemer shows the chosen twelve the rich lesson on humble service by washing their feet (John 13) and then in a rare passage of comfort, the Master assures them of the hope of heaven (14:1-6). In the fifteenth stanza of this powerful gospel account of John, the Lord urges His devotees to be busy in "bearing much fruit" in the kingdom of God (15:8). Now, as we come to the pivotal sixteenth chapter of John, we

find words of deepest consolation as Christ stands in the very shadow of Gethsemane and its climactic events. Even though the chosen few would leave Him alone -- due to worldly pressure and danger -- the Father would still be near to sustain the Son! In words of solemnity and rich pathos we read:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the

world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

How those sentiments would warm the hearts of those men in future days of imprisonment, opposition and death! They would be

overwhelmed in suffering and stand in jeopardy every hour (I Corinthians 15:30-31) as the sentence of death hovered over them daily (II Corinthians 1:9). James would be slain by the sword (Acts 12), and John exiled to the Isle of Patmos "for tribulation in the kingdom" (Revelation 1:9). Christ had promised such to those who valiantly followed the way of the Cross (John 15:16-21). But, in the midst of such persecution would come the beautiful consolation that the Lord would be with them to the very end (Matthew 28:20). Verily, with much tribulation they had entered the kingdom of God's dear Son (Acts 14:22). Early saints not only - Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**Someone once observed, "We never really break God's laws. We may be broken on them, but they always remain in tact."**

**When we learn we've done wrong, there are several reactions we may have. We could do like Joycelyn Elders, who at her son's trial for selling cocaine, was asked by the judge, "Do you think he is likely to commit more crimes?" She simply said, "I don't feel that it was a crime." The evidence was there, he confessed to the crime, and he was convicted and sentenced.**

**Many today treat God's laws like that too. As if denying that an action is a sin will make it any less a sin. Today remember what Jesus said as He encouraged us to see His light: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48)."**

**The only right reaction to learning we've done wrong, is repentance.**

# A Monumental Chapter

Continued From Page 3  
believed, they also often suffered for the Savior (Philippians 1:29).

As this lovely chapter opens Christ Jesus informs the Apostles that the time was near when opponents of truth would cast them out of the synagogues and even kill them thinking they were, by such actions, doing the will of God. Satan is shrewd in convincing religious zealots that their dastardly actions will please heaven! It was not easy being a Christian in the first century. But, through the Savior victory could be ultimately won (II Corinthians 2:14), "We are always led in triumph in Christ."

C. A. Miles wrote a brilliant stanza for us to sing that brings out the challenge of Christianity:

"It may be in the valley where countless dangers hide

It may be in the sunshine that I, in peace, abide

But this one thing I know -- if it be dark or fair

If Jesus goes with me, I'll go anywhere."

One of the major reasons that John 16 is such a monumental chapter in the life of the Redeemer is the

work of the Holy Spirit mentioned therein. Not only do we learn that the Apostles were guided into all truth by the Spirit (verse 13) but beginning in verse seven we see that the Holy Spirit convicted the world of sin, righteousness and judgment to come. A perfect parallel would be Paul preaching the gospel to Felix in Acts 24:24 wherein the peerless Apostle reasoned with the vile ruler concerning "righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come." Truly, the worlds of Scripture are "spirit and life" (John 6:63). Since the clarity of Ephesians 6:17 tells us that "the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God," we can ascertain how the Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sinfulness. Jesus tells us in Luke 8:11 and John 15:3 two salient points on this subject:

The seed of the kingdom is the word of God . . .

. . . you are clean by the word . . .

In I Peter 1:22 we learn that we are "begotten by the word." The Spirit's part in the new birth that Jesus discussed in John 3:3-7 is evidently the planting of the seed (the word) in good and honest hearts. On the Day of

Pentecost the Apostles preached the word, the oracles of God (I Peter 4, 11) and those who gladly received the message were baptized (Acts 2:38-41). One can also see the harmony of this arrangement in Acts 8:12 where these sterling thoughts are recorded:

"But when they believed Philip's preaching

the things concerning the kingdom of

God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they

were baptized, both men and women."

Therefore, we properly conclude that when the message the Spirit provided is proclaimed, men are thereby convicted of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come! Preachers should allow this divine arrangement to have its full power in the hearts and minds of men by speaking sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). As we analyze the three subjects of sin, righteousness and the judgment we naturally conclude again that there is close correlation between them and the Holy Scriptures. In I John 3:4 we learn that sin is transgression of God's law. In James 4:17 the truth is set

forth regarding sin as a failure to do that which we know to be right. In John 12:48 our Lord based judgment upon the words He spoke. We cannot escape the close affinity between the Holy Spirit and the message revealed through the Apostles in the sacred text!

The Master comforted the disciples while in their midst as we read in Mark 6:50 and John 14:27 . . .

"Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid:

"My peace I give unto you; let not your

heart be troubled neither let it be afraid."

As Christ prepared to go back to the Father a promise was given regarding another Comforter - the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit came it was for the major, epochal purpose of guiding the Apostles into all truth (16:13). This is a tremendous verse with everlasting repercussions. During the balance of the first century, from the time the Spirit came unto the death of the Apostles by the end of that century, some 65 years in all, the Holy Spirit revealed the message of the New Testament. In Hebrews (3:20) we learn that

that message contained "the everlasting testament." Therefore, there would never be a need or purpose for a latter-day revelation. Since we are "complete in Christ" we do not need another prophet, priest or King (Colossians 2:10). We need not discuss whether Joseph Smith is better than Ellen White or Charles Russell is superior to Mary Baker Eddy because none is needed and all are superfluous! In the Book of Mormon, II Nephi 25 blatantly calls a person a fool who is content with the Bible alone! But, if the Holy Spirit did what Jesus said He would do - guide the Apostles into all Truth - then all of it was revealed while Christ's ambassadors lived (II Corinthians 5:20). In John 17:17 and 8:32 our Savior clearly enunciated that God's word was the Truth that makes men free. There is no place in heaven's economy for latter-day revelations. They are, absolutely, too late!

Brethren, we surely ought to be content with the covenant sealed in the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28) and busily engaged in contending for it (Jude 3).

## Looking Toward Home

Gary Colley

Nothing could be of greater interest to the minds of toiling faithful Christians than the promised Eternal Home of rest for the soul (Hebrews 4:1). Heaven is the ultimate in the heart's desire for escape from this world, for the relief and release from the burdens of sin, and deliverance from the continual temptations, sighs, sorrows, and suffering that sin has brought to those in this life (Romans 5:12). Our faith is to be secured in the evidence that the Bible is everlastingly true (Matthew 24:35) and that Jesus was the divine Son of the Living God (John 20:30-31), who offered the perfect sacrifice for all who will obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9), and these things support our hope for a "new heaven and a new earth" wherein dwelleth only righteousness (Revelation 2:1).

This eternal home is yet to be realized and enjoyed in a future world not now seen except by faith (Hebrews 11:1; II Corinthians 4:16-18; II Peter 1:9).

### BLESSED ASSURANCE

On the night of the institution of the Lord's supper and His betrayal, Jesus announced to His disciples the shocking news that He would soon lay down His life for the sin of the world as prophesied (John 1:29; John 13:31-38). That meant, of course, that their blessed teacher, comforter, companion, and guide would be separated from them. Such words from their beloved Saviour, Lord, and King caused them pain and sorrow and seemed more than they could bear. It even brought them to deny that such could transpire. It was at this point that Jesus spoke one of the

most tender and assuring discourses that has ever graced moral lips!

"Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And 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. And whither I go, ye know the way . . . I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:1-6).

### WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

For the great trials before them, without their blessed Master's care, Jesus reminded them that they had their faith in Him, and in His Father, to lean heavily upon. They were no

doubt encouraged as they were assured that in the "Father's house," which speaks of His domain, dynasty, or the entire Heavenly habitation of God, were many "mansions." This is the word, according to W. E. Vine, for "manor or manse" and not simply a room which Jesus was going away to prepare for them. It is made clear that it was to be in the place of God's abode, of the eternal realm of the blessed, and to be theirs forever and forever! Christians rejoice to sing, "Heaven will surely be worth it all!"

### SEPARATION

#### ONLY TEMPORARY

By these promises Jesus was showing His disciples that the separation, because of His death, would not be lasting but only temporary. The faithful, then and now according to this promise, will be with Him after

this life is completed throughout the endless ages! (Cf. Romans 14:7-8). This was not just a "pie in the sky" promise. Jesus says, "if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you" (:2). He who could not lie is saying, "If I knew that you who are my beloved followers were cherishing a hope of life beyond the grave and it was not true, I would not have allowed you to continue in deception! If you would later come with Me to the Father's house where I am going and where those who die in their sins cannot come (John 8:24), follow Me. For, "I am the way, the truth, and the life!" (:6). With such trust as the disciples had learned to have in the Saviour through His teaching and many miracles, these men went forth to preach the Gospel to the whole world!

September 16, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- A College Caution
- What is man? - (No. 3)
- Avoiding Adultery Against The Almighty
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Greatest Institution In The World

Volume 30 Number 38  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Truth

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

the

## Words Of Truth Lectureship '94



September 30 - October 2

Director: Glenn Colley

Theme: Holding To Sound Doctrine  
(II Timothy 1:13)

**FRIDAY**

9:30 - 10:15

"Pondering Eternity and Sound Doctrine"

*B. J. Clarke - Southaven, MS*

10:30 - 11:15

"Sound Doctrine Directs Our Homes"

*Gary Colley - Austin, TX*

12:45 - 1:30

"Important Ways To Maintain Sound Doctrine In The Local Church"

*Ralph Gilmore - Henderson, TN*

1:45 - 2:30

"Sound Doctrine Regarding Acceptable Worship Today"

*Winford Claiborne - Fayetteville, TN*

6:30 - 7:00

Singing

*Clifford Smith - Altoona, AL*

7:00 - 8:00

"Recognizing Christ's Church In The 90's"

*Tom Holland - Brentwood, TN*

**SATURDAY**

9:30 - 10:15

"Hold Fast The Form Of Sound Words, II Tim. 1:13"

*Flavil Nichols - Jasper, AL*

10:30 - 11:15

Divided Session: Men/Women - Sound Doctrine  
"Christian Women In The 90's"

*Don and Jane McWhorter - Fayette, AL*

12:45 - 1:30

"Sound Doctrine: Our Standard For Morality In The 90's"

*Don McWhorter*

6:30 - 7:00

Singing

*Kyle Wadley - Northport, AL*

7:00 - 8:00

"Sound Doctrine Regarding Authority"

*Bobby Duncan - Adamsville, AL*

(Brother Duncan will present a Question and Answer period after his lesson).

**SUNDAY**

9:30 - 10:15 (Class)

"Sound Doctrine In Reliable Hermeneutics"

*Joseph Meador - Austin, TX*

10:30 - 11:30

"Sound Doctrine Versus Humanism"

*Joseph Meador*

THEME:  
"HOLDING TO SOUND DOCTRINE"  
II TIMOTHY 1:13

## Featured Speakers

**Winford Claiborne**

Presently working with the West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, TN, brother Claiborne's preaching experience spans a 50+ year period. He is also a businessman and teacher and has been a flyer for almost 39 years.



**B. J. Clarke**

A graduate of Freed-Hardeman University, brother Clarke currently preaches for the Lord's church in Southaven, MS. He is an experienced debater and currently serves as editor of "Power" magazine.



**Gary G. Colley, Sr.**

For 40 years, brother Colley has worked on radio and television, conducted numerous Gospel meetings and written several articles for brotherhood publications. He is presently with the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, TX.



**Bobby Duncan**

Brother Duncan's contributions to the spreading of the Gospel include local work with the Lord's church in Adamsville, AL, daily radio and television programs, editing two Gospel papers and conducting many Gospel meetings.



**Ralph Gilmore**

g preached in 34 and 13 countries,

Gilmore now serves the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, TN. He also has 13 years of experience as a member of the Bible faculty at Freed-Hardeman University.



**Tom Holland**

More than 50 books have come from the pen of brother Holland. He has been preaching since 1949, serving congregations in four states. Currently he is involved in writing and speaking at lectureships and Gospel meetings.



**Don McWhorter**

For over 20 years brother McWhorter has faithfully served the Lord's church in Fayette, AL. He is also a speaker on an internationally syndicated radio and television program and a well known author.



**Jane McWhorter**

Sister McWhorter has contributed several superb books to the Lord's work. She is a popular speaker at Ladies' Days and was honored in 1993 when she was presented with an award naming her as "Alabama's Mother of the Year."



**Joseph Meador**

In 1993 brother Meador moved to Austin, TX to begin work as Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies. He also currently serves as associate editor of the periodical, "The Christian Worker."



**Flavil Nichols**

Sixty years ago this year brother Nichols began what has been a long and fruitful service as a Gospel preacher. He now devotes full time to preaching in Gospel meetings and other special appointments.



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Visit Soon  
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Church Of Christ  
Jasper, AL 35501

## A College Caution

Glenn Colley

I am an advocate of Christian colleges. First, because when I walk the campuses of state schools and when I read reports of their agnostic professors, ambivalent morals, and the popularity of alcohol, my soul cries for a better way. Seeing and reading about these things makes me appreciate Christian colleges where Christ is respected. Second, I am an advocate of Christian colleges because so many young people select their life-long companion while in college. Many Christian young people come from small towns where there are few Christian boys or girls to date and marry. The Christian college campus offers a broad array of personalities from which to select one's mate. Who we marry affects immeasurably the quality of our lives. I met and married my wife while in such a college, and my parents did so before me.

I do not however, endorse Christian colleges without reservation. Church members who simply assume that all Christian colleges are sound in the faith and deserve our support and our youth, are foolishly asking for embarrassment and shame.

It is true that the college is not the church, and therefore is independent and self-governing. However, always remember that Christian colleges are run by people, and if their goals and values are not solidly rooted in God's Word, then the word "Christian" on the Christian College is an unfortunate facade for a place which will train our

children in how to think erroneously.

Today our area Christian college administrators often perceive themselves to be in bit of a fix when it comes to taking strong positions for the truth. For you see, they know that there is a great movement afoot to change the church. The liberal brethren among us believe the church of Christ should unite with denominations. They believe we can worship with instrumental music and still please God. They believe people should be able to marry, divorce, and remarry, while elders and preachers sit by in quiet passiveness. They believe we are saved by grace alone. They believe we should adopt a hermeneutic (science of interpreting the scriptures) which leaves Bible readers without definitive truth to preach and teach. They believe elders have no authority except with regard to showing a good example.

So what are university administrators to do? Since they call their schools "Christian" colleges, and since they maintain Bible departments in which doctrines are taught, and since they have guest speakers come to campus to speak, they HAVE to take positions with regard to this "change" movement. It's unavoidable. The rub comes in the fact that whichever way they go, they will offend some supporters, and lose some students; either because the student and parents look for a more liberal atmosphere, or because the student and parents want to avoid the existing liberal atmosphere.

Some administrators

have decided that they must mirror the brotherhood if they are to serve well their student body. That is, because there are preachers in our country who are to the left, others to the right, and still others who are sound and right in the middle of God's word, and because the administration wants to attract youth from all our churches, they will have some liberal speakers to campus and some conservative. They will, they think, be thusly be balanced.

I want however, to propose some important considerations:

1. These administrators should be Christians first and university administrators second. They are personally responsible for contending for the faith (Jude 3), in their position, as Christians are in other positions. What makes them different? It is a shame in any employment to argue "I can't stand for right. My job won't permit it."

2. When "change agents" are brought to speak on Christian campuses, students are being exposed to false doctrine with the endorsement of the respected college. The administrator may object by saying, "Just having them here does not imply endorsement. This is an institute of higher learning, and we simply want to expose our students to a broad spectrum of ideas." If however, having a false teacher to speak on campus is for that purpose, and the school wishes to maintain faithful soundness of doctrine, then those speakers should be followed by a disclaimer by a representative of the school

and a correction of any false doctrine taught in the speech.

3. There are those of us who are working through brotherhood papers and through our pulpits to fight against the new "change" movement that is dividing so many churches of Christ. When college administrators invite and thus endorse the so-called "agents of change" to their campuses, they are opposing our efforts. They may not perceive it that way, but that's exactly what is happening.

How strong is the motivation to bring in speakers who are known for their liberal viewpoints and preaching? One nearby Christian university recently hosted such speakers to preach, over the unanimous opposition of their own Bible department! Was their decision based solely on the question, "What would be most pleasing to God?" They trust their Bible faculty to teach our youth how to be pleasing to God. Either the Bible professors were right in their opposition to the decision, or they aren't men of sound judgment with regard to

pleasing God. Which is it? Furthermore, if the Bible faculty was right in their opposition, why did the administration not follow their advice to repeal the invitations?

I am an advocate of Christian education and Christian colleges. However, I want to express a caution. Don't support any Christian college blindly. Ask questions. Attend events. Quiz teachers and administrators. Make sure they are helping, and not hurting you in your quest to "Train up" your children in "the way they should go." Don't simply assume that behind the words "Christian college" will come solid Biblical teaching.

Remember  
Lectureship '94  
September 30  
thru  
October 2nd.  
Theme:  
"Holding To  
Sound Doctrine"



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# "What Is Man?" (No. 3)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

I am happy to continue with you, my dear readers, a subject begun earlier on the pages of Words Of Truth, a paper for which I have written for more than a quarter of a century. "What is man?" is both an Old Testament and a New Testament query (Job 7:17; Psalms 8:4; 144:3; Hebrews 2:6). Up to this point in our contemplation we have dealt with the question primarily from the negative side and refuted some of the many misconceptions that men hold relative to the nature of man. Now we turn the coin over and approach the subject positively.

"What is man?" I answer that man is a creature made in the image and likeness of God. We read in Genesis 1:26, 27, "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 he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 2:7 has man made from the dust of the ground and God's breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Genesis 2:21-23 has woman made or "buildd" from the

rib removed from Adam's side. Adam was dust refined; Eve was dust doubly refined! Psalm 100:3 has God as our Maker; man did not make himself. Evolutionary Time and Chance did not make him. Neither Scripture nor Science portray him as eternal. David declared in Psalm 139:14 that he was fearfully and wonderfully made. Solomon declared, in Ecclesiastes 7:29 that the Almighty made man upright but man has sought out many inventions. In Matthew 19:4 Jesus went on divine record as saying that both man and woman were made and were made at the beginning. If anything, Mark 10:6 is clearer as Jesus says that man and woman were made at the beginning of the creation. Such will not fit the evolutionary timetable of either organic or theistic proponents for a surety. Theistic evolutionists are just as infidelic toward Genesis 1 as any of the atheistic evolutionists are. I would not turn around for the difference. Each one is a disgrace to God and exhibits total contempt for His Holy Book - the Bible. Quite frankly, if I were going to be any kind of

evolutionist, I would be a thoroughly atheistic one. Darwin, Huxley, Simpson, Gould, Sagan, etc., would be my accepted authorities - not Deity and the Divine Book known as the Holy Bible. In Acts 17:28, 29 Paul before the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill has man as the offspring of God and affirms that it is in God that we have being, movement and life.

Evolution cannot account for how the non-living came into being. Organic evolution cannot account for how a lifeless something such as gas, water, rocks, air, etc., turned itself into a simple living something. Organic evolution cannot account for how a simple living something like an amoeba, and such is not really simple but very complex, turned itself into enough kinds as ultimately to produce complex man, woman, boy and girl. A one-celled organism to a baby is quite a leap! From nothing comes nothing and yet evolution has something coming out of nothing unless they concede the universe as eternal which is even SCIENTIFIC NON-SENSE to say nothing of SCRIPTURAL STUPI-

DITY!! Absurdity takes on a new dimension and definition in evolutionary circles of so-called intellectual processes. Life ALWAYS comes from life and yet evolution has life coming from the non-living such as dirt, rocks, gasses, air, etc. Who or what produced the dirt, rocks, gasses, air, etc.,? This, too, is basic in this whole procedure. From the very beginning of everything all things have brought forth after their own kind. Yet evolution has to deny that in millions, billions and even trillions of instances. And this is rational? And this is scientific? And this is intellectual? Yet, this is the silly stupidity our children are taught from K through the highest University degree. It is far, Far, FAR more difficult to believe in godless evolution than in God's creative work as set forth so resplendently and regally in Genesis 1.

There was a time when earth was not. God said let there be an earth and it sprang into functional being. There was a time when sun, moon and stars were not. Creatively, Jehovah willed them into functional being.

There was a time when there was no plant, animal or human life on this earth. God said let there be life in these various or variegated forms and life came instantly into functional being. .

Yet, if evolution is true, man is in the image of lower animals such as lemurs, monkeys, apes, etc. He is not in the image and likeness of God at all. In fact, man is just lower animal life at a later time in the scale of evolutionary advancement. We are just a rung or two higher on the ladder than are our ancestral animals below us and really enjoy no more intrinsic value than do they. Believers in Genesis 1 cannot accept either atheistic or theistic evolution. Both are Satanic in origin. Man came from the sublime (God) - not the slime (evolution). For a surety the latter concept fuels all sorts of vice and violence in our world. Society will NEVER rise any higher than its concepts of origin, purpose and destiny. Evolution bats out on all three levels.

P. O. Box 464 - Ripley, Tennessee 38063

## Avoiding Adultery Against The Almighty

**Neal Pollard**

In fleshly matters, no mental tragedy or emotional calamity would seem to exceed that of a spouse's infidelity. Many who have been thus betrayed could tell tales of horror centering around the episode or evidence which uncovered their spouse's unfaithfulness. Soiling the sexual purity of marriage produces an anguish aptly described only by those thus betrayed.

How devastating it must be for a devoted godly, and giving spouse to have enter his or her living room an unfaithful spouse arm in arm with someone new, voicing his or her loyalty and "love" to an alien of their marriage

bed. Worse still must be an unexpected encounter, when the offended spouse walks in on the offending spouse in the very act of adultery. The bridge of trust, fond memory, and joy surely crumbles before the tear-filled eyes of the offended. Disbelief and self-blame follow the initial shock. Depression and agonizing contemplation set off a seemingly endless attempt to cope with such betrayal. How logical it would be to think that one never fully recovers from this trauma.

The picture of adultery should be painted this ugly. Even when society continues to glamorize sexual impurity, extra marital affairs, and a

multiplicity of bed partners, God's Word paints an immutable picture of God's Holy concept of purity. By Inspiration, biblical writers emphatically state, "Keep thyself pure!" (I Timothy 5:22), "Blessed are the pure in heart!" (Matthew 5:8), "Think on pure things!" (Philippians 4:8), and "Love one another with a pure heart fervently!" (I Peter 1:22). Purity must be a cornerstone characteristic of marriages, too (cf. Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:3-9; I Corinthians 7:1-5).

The relationship of man toward God is likened to a marriage throughout the

•Continued on page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**All of us have certain things in common. For example, we have all measured things in inches and feet. Because we have a standardized system, I know that if you measure an object to be one foot long, then it's 12 inches.**

**The foot was originally based on the length of a human foot. Imagine that! That's no standard at all. I suspect that lumber retailers and house-builders with the longest feet did the best business.**

**There's a point about religion you need to consider here. Judges 17:6 of the Bible says, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." You see? No standard to follow. I suggest that today we have a standard for worship, for integrity, for family and for life. It's the Bible, and it's God's word. If Timothy 3:16 says, "ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."**

# Avoiding Adultery Against The Almighty

Continued from page 3  
 scriptures. To picture the idolatrous people of God the weeping prophet relayed the scathing rebuke of Jehovah, saying, "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks" (Jeremiah 3:8-9). Thereafter, God is depicted as a forgiving spouse with outstretched Arms (cf. Jeremiah 3:12ff). One can envision His spiritual "wife,"

Israel, in an embrace with sin and destruction. Though her "new love" was wrenching spiritual life from her, Israel mocked her Almighty Husband (cf. Jeremiah 3:20). Their affair was vain, shameful, and rebellious (Jeremiah 3:23-24), but the northern tribes could not leave the suitor of sin. Idolatry, forsaking God, and pursuing the world (synonymous activities) are portrayed as spiritual adultery (Jeremiah 2:20; Ezekiel 16:15-24; Hosea 4:15), the price for which is eternally high!!

The church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9). The New Testament Christian is said to be married to Him (Romans 7:4). Therefore, we

are expected to maintain spiritual "fidelity" (loyalty) unto the Lord (Revelation 2:10). Christ was both saddened and deeply offended because His church at Ephesus had forgotten Him as their first love, and He demanded that they apologize and rectify (correct) the situation (Revelation 2:4-5). Christ loves with a longsuffering charity, but He will not tolerate spiritual adultery.

What spouse on earth would tolerate a mate who was untrue to their marriage vows every week or every day? What spouse would accept an apology from a mate who continues having the affair for which they ask forgiveness? What spouse

would take back a mate who casually dismisses his or her own promiscuity, and expects it to be forgotten or overlooked? A spouse who would tolerate such behavior would have to be blind, foolish, and desperate.

With kindness and love it must be said that there are Christians who treat their spiritual groom that way, apparently believing Him to be as tolerant as the cowardly and ignorant spouse illustrated in the above paragraph. The daily thrust of those Christians' lives is to take God's name in vain, violate Christian ethics in business, or whatever is their sin of choice and, thus, break their vows to Christ to be the light of the world. A

Christian who seeks God's forgiveness, but who clings to the sin is as brazen as the above mentioned mate. This type of Christian expects his or her sins to be overlooked, perhaps because they think of themselves as "different" from anyone else; a special case. But Christ is no fool or weakling. He shuns the impenitent and willful sinner who refuses Him.

The children of God must be like the five wise virgins of Christ's parable in Matthew 25, standing with their lamps trimmed and bright and ready for the groom regardless of the day or hour wherein He comes (1-13). Being a Christian is not enough. We must be faithful!

## The Greatest Institution In The World

Gary Colley

So many who might be asked about "the greatest institution in the world" would name a school, hospital, benevolent institution, social club, lodge, or some other; but most in the world would not name the church of Christ! To the above-named institutions many willingly give generously of their time, money, and energy. Some even boast of their accomplishments above the church of Christ. Perhaps our values are gauged by many different standards and this could be the reason different answers would result.

The greatest institution in the world is revealed and defined in the greatest book in the world, the Bible. The greatest institution in the world is the plan of God for the salvation of lost man (Eph. 2). It was built by the greatest man that ever lived, Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13-18). It was purchased with the greatest price ever paid for any institution, the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). It is built on the greatest foundation that has ever been laid for any building or institution, Christ's teaching (I Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-22). Its plans were not thought up by Paul, Cephas, Apollos, nor any man this side or the other side of them, regardless of the claims they may have made for inspiration or headship or revelation (I Cor. 1:12-13). The Way was not in

accordance with the philosophy or thinking of men (II Peter 1:20-21). As a matter of fact, they thought in the first century, as well as some have in our century, that "the preaching of the cross is . . . foolishness" because it did not request nor require their thoughts or ways! Many are lost because they refuse to let God be God, Christ be King, and the Holy Spirit be the Revelator of all truth (Jn. 17:8; 16:13).

But, with or without man's approval, the church of Christ was fully established on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection and continues to exist wherever the seed of the Gospel is planted today and where men receive it in faith and obedience (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; Mk. 9:1; Acts 2:1-4). It has never needed man's wisdom to carry out its work of preaching, teaching, and benevolence (II Tim. 4:1-2; I Tim. 4:16; Acts 6:1-5; Jas. 1:27), and for this cause many problems have been caused and many have turned to their own institutions so as to carry out their own wills, turning their backs on the Greatest Institution in the world! The Lord has done wonders with the human materials with which He has had to work in this divine institution and it will be victorious in the end.

It is also the greatest institution because salvation is there! (Acts 4:12; Eph. 5:23).

However big the claims of splendor and glory may be for the man-made institutions, which have no doubt benefited mankind in many ways, not one of them can claim to save ONE soul.

Jesus shows that the soul is more important than the body (Matt. 10:28), that the soul is worth more than all the world (Matt. 16:26), and that it is eternal (Matt. 25:46); so also the institution through which these blessings come is more important than any earthly establishment. It is intended to supply man's spiritual needs for the salvation of the soul.

Jesus made it very clear that His Kingdom was not of this world (Jn. 18:36). Though it was established in the world, it was not of the world in its work, principles, or thrust. Man's goals are for the success and ease in this life, while the blessings of this institution are for here and eternity.

Neither are there any earthly headquarters. Some find this difficult to understand and accept. Jesus is on the throne in Heaven at God's right hand and was given (following His death, burial, and resurrection) the preeminence and headship over the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Man's institutions have earthly headquarters with presidents, popes, and other badges of distinction given by men; but the greatest institution in the world has no earthly headquarters.

The "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15) sends His order through His authorized messengers, the apostles (II Cor. 5:20). They are guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven (Jn. 16:13). The "perfect law of liberty" was well-delivered for all men for all time (Jude 3). It is, and shall always be, the "all truth" that directs the affairs of the church of Christ, the greatest institution in the world. The New Testament is our guide.

Christ is the chief Shepherd with all authority (Matt. 28:18-20). Under, and always in accordance with His authority, the elders (also known by the names bishops, pastors, and overseers) have their rule (Hebrew 13:17). These men are not over many flocks, nor a diocese, or over "house churches" in a large city. They are appointed over, and are to feed, "the flock of God which is among you" (I Peter 5:2). The wisdom of God is certainly and wonderfully seen in this divine arrangement. It is strange that man's institutions do not respect this simple plan. In addition to the elders, the permanent places of service in the church of Christ are deacons, evangelists, and teachers (I Timothy 3:8-13; Ephesians 4:11). The greatest institution in the world expresses God's wisdom in embracing the greatest

simplicity! None will be safe who add to the King's will with their own wisdom and way.

Let us be thankful enough, wise enough, and humble enough to accept, labor in, and give glory to God in the greatest institution in the world!

### FOUR VERSIONS OF MARK 16:16:

The *Universalist* says, "He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be saved. All are going to be saved." The *Roman Catholic* says, "He that believeth not and is baptized shall be saved. Whether it be a newborn baby or an adult at the point of death, the sacrament of baptism has ability to take away sins. The *Protestant Denominationalist* says, "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved. Salvation is by faith only, without baptism or anything else." The *Lord* said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . . ." Which of these versions are you willing to accept?

September 23, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Spanking Your Children
- "What Is Man?" (No. 4)
- Bags With Holes In Them
- The Use Of The Church Building
- My Grandfather
- "Most Of A Minute"

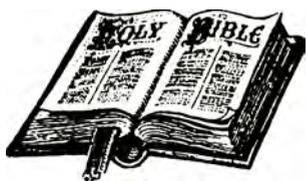
Volume 30 Number 39  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

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

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## Words Of Truth Lectureship '94



September 30 - October 2

Director: Glenn Colley

Theme: Holding To Sound Doctrine  
(II Timothy 1:13)

**FRIDAY**

9:30 - 10:15  
"Pondering Eternity and Sound Doctrine"  
*B. J. Clarke - Southaven, MS*

10:30 - 11:15  
"Sound Doctrine Directs Our Homes"  
*Gary Colley - Austin, TX*

12:45 - 1:30  
"Important Ways To Maintain Sound Doctrine In The Local Church"  
*Ralph Gilmore - Henderson, TN*

1:45 - 2:30  
"Sound Doctrine Regarding Acceptable Worship Today"  
*Winford Claiborne - Fayetteville, TN*

6:30 - 7:00  
Singing  
*Clifford Smith - Altoona, AL*

7:00 - 8:00  
"Recognizing Christ's Church In The 90's"  
*Tom Holland - Brentwood, TN*

**SATURDAY**

9:30 - 10:15  
"Hold Fast The Form Of Sound Words, II Tim. 1:13"  
*Flavil Nichols - Jasper, AL*

10:30 - 11:15  
Divided Session: Men/Women - Sound Doctrine  
"Christian Women In The 90's"  
*Don and Jane McWhorter - Fayette, AL*

12:45 - 1:30  
"Sound Doctrine: Our Standard For Morality In The 90's"  
*Don McWhorter*

6:30 - 7:00  
Singing  
*Kyle Wadley - Northport, AL*

7:00 - 8:00  
"Sound Doctrine Regarding Authority"  
*Bobby Duncan - Adamsville, AL*

(Brother Duncan will present a Question and Answer period after his lesson).

**SUNDAY**

9:30 - 10:15 (Class)  
"Sound Doctrine In Reliable Hermeneutics"  
*Joseph Meador - Austin, TX*

10:30 - 11:30  
"Sound Doctrine Versus Humanism"  
*Joseph Meador*

THEME:  
**"HOLDING TO SOUND DOCTRINE"**  
II TIMOTHY 1:13

## Featured Speakers

### Winford Claiborne

Presently working with the West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, TN, brother Claiborne's preaching experience spans a 50+ year period. He is also a businessman and teacher and has been a flyer for almost 39 years.



### B. J. Clarke

A graduate of Freed-Hardeman University, brother Clarke currently preaches for the Lord's church in Southaven, MS. He is an experienced debater and currently serves as editor of "Power" magazine.



### Gary G. Colley, Sr.

For 40 years, brother Colley has worked on radio and television, conducted numerous Gospel meetings and written several articles for brotherhood publications. He is presently with the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, TX.



### Bobby Duncan

Brother Duncan's contributions to the spreading of the Gospel include local work with the Lord's church in Adamsville, AL, daily radio and television programs, editing two Gospel papers and conducting many Gospel meetings.



### Ralph Gilmore

Having preached in 34 states and 13 countries, brother Gilmore now serves the Campbell Street Church of Christ in Jackson, TN. He also has 13 years of experience as a member of the Bible faculty at Freed-Hardeman University.

### Tom Holland

More than 50 books have come from the pen of brother Holland. He has been preaching since 1949, serving congregations in four states. Currently he is involved in writing and speaking at lectureships and Gospel meetings.



### Don McWhorter

For over 20 years brother McWhorter has faithfully served the Lord's church in Fayette, AL. He is also a speaker on an internationally syndicated radio and television program and a well known author.



### Jane McWhorter

Sister McWhorter has contributed several superb books to the Lord's work. She is a popular speaker at Ladies Days and was honored in 1993 when she was presented with an award naming her as "Alabama's Mother of the Year."



### Joseph Meador

In 1993 brother Meador moved to Austin, TX to begin work as Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies. He also currently serves as associate editor of the periodical, "The Christian Worker."



### Flavil Nichols

Sixty years ago this year brother Nichols began what has been a long and fruitful service as a Gospel preacher. He now devotes full time to preaching in Gospel meetings and other special appointments.



# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Spanking Your Children

Glenn Colley

Two recent polls have surfaced on the subject of corporal punishment (spanking) for children. Are you aware of the lively debate on the issue? In an article on the subject by Miriam Durkin the words "spanking" and "hitting" are used interchangeably. That's because many people see no difference.

In one poll, by the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, "49 percent of parents said they used spanking or hitting in the past year, down from 68 percent in 1988."

The second poll discussed in Miriam's article was a Gallup poll in which 66 percent of people surveyed agreed with the statement, "It is sometimes necessary to give a child a good hard spanking." That number was down from 94 percent in 1968.

Murray Straus, co-director of the Family Research Lab at the University of New Hampshire will shock those of us who believe in the practice of spanking. Here are some quotes:

"Children who were physically punished grow up to have significantly higher incidences of aggression, depression, spousal abuse and feelings of alienation than children not physically punished."

"Kids who have been hit even show lower levels of economic achievement later in life." Later in the article he wrote, "More than 90 percent of parents say they've used corporal punishment at least once." (Does that suggest that the 10% of society that is rich is wealthy because they weren't spanked as children?)

He believes spanking should be "illegal . . . It's already illegal in Austria, Denmark, Finland and Norway. German and Canadian parliaments are studying the issue."

"One day hitting a child will be considered as reprehensible as a man smacking his wife -- behavior that also was sanctioned for hundreds of years. . ."

The Family Support Center, a nonprofit agency in Charlotte, N.C. offered suggestions to parents who

feel compelled to spank their children. Here are four techniques to resist spanking:

1. Use timeout. Send the child to a non-threatening place for the time of two minutes per year of the child's life.

2. Get a grip. Maybe you need a timeout. Take five deep breaths. Phone a friend. Take a hot bath. Do sit ups.

3. Redirect or distract the child. . . escort her to the crayons and puzzles at the kitchen table.

4. Choose your battles. If children aren't hurting property or another person, sometimes it's OK to laugh at their antics. Children aren't miniature adults. Also, sometimes bad behavior is a way of getting attention; if you ignore Johnny's Bart Simpson imitations during dinner, he just might stop.

What you've just read is absurd and insulting. It strongly implies that a parent who sees fit to spank a misbehaving child is in reality the one who is out of line. It also promotes a philosophy of training which will teach children that there are no solid absolute rights or wrongs in life. Furthermore, parents who buy into these philosophies should realize that their children are not going to simply awaken one morning when they are 17 and understand or appreciate authority. The children will have learned a *lack* of respect for authority from this kind of flimsy parenting.

What is most disturbing about this debate isn't Mr. Straus or Miriam Durkin or other radicals like them whose views are decidedly not popular in the mainstream. It is that mainstream America may be getting more and more permissive and less strict in their childrearing procedures. As one mother puts it, "When my children hear someone saying these things on television, they look at me and ask, 'So why do you spank us?'"

While we realize that no individual parent reading this article can control America, we can control ourselves. Are you practicing sensible parenting? Consider these suggestions:

Take time with your

children. Listen to them. Look them in the eye when talking with them. Be merciful and considerate toward them. Ephesians 6:4 says, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Teach your children with your actions. Include them when possible in activities that will demonstrate Christian attitudes and deeds. Joshua, though dead, still speaks through the Bible. He saw his family as a unit and a team. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)."

Teach your children with your words. Don't assume they know about matters pertaining to Christian character. Say it. Verbalize these teachings often. Let your love show through what you teach. The Proverb writer penned, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)."

Correct them. Don't promise a spanking and then fail to deliver. Teach them to respect your word because you are the parent. Teach them to respect authority. Spank them when they plainly and overtly challenge parental authority. Teach them to follow your instructions without complaining. Discipline lovingly and firmly. Hebrews 12:11 says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Teach your children respect for your spouse. Ephesians 6:1-3 says, "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."

Child abuse is wrong. But spanking, administered by loving parents is very right (Proverbs 23:13, 14).

# "What Is Man?"

(No. 4)

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

"What is man?" is both an Old Testament and New Testament query as per Job 7:17; Psalms 8:4; 144:3 and Hebrews 2:6. Thus far in our literary studies we have approached it negatively and are now looking at it positively. In our last study I suggested that man is a creature made in the image of God, in the likeness of Deity.

But, again, I ask the question, "What is man?" The second major response is that man is a sinner and has fallen from his original estate he enjoyed initially in Edenic excellency. There are 1,189 chapters in our beloved Bible. Only two of them -- Genesis 1 and 2 -- set forth man in a state of innocency. The remaining 1,187 chapters set forth man the sinner, the one who has transgressed heaven's law and has fallen by his defiance of Deity's directives. My saying or writing that does not make it so, but the Bible's saying it does make it so. We read of man's sin in Genesis 3. Both Eve first and Adam next fell into grievous sin. They were NOT created sinners; they became sinners by sinning.

This is precisely the way we become sinners today, Calvinism to the contrary notwithstanding. The Bible teaches in Isaiah 59:1, 2, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; But

your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

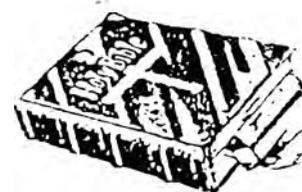
This reflection from the Statesman Seer, Isaiah, can be said of every generation from Adam to the present. The New Testament is just that replete in suggesting the universal sinfulness of all the accountable race. Listen as Paul says,

"What then, are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; . . ." (Romans 3:9, 23).

"John, the apostle of love, impresses upon our minds the same striking sentiments as he writes,

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:8-10)."

Many are saying today that life is empty, void of value and totally deficient of real meaning. Such is true of the wrong kind of life but not of the right kind of living. Too many desire to do what Paul said his generation had done Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# Bags With Holes In Them

**W. A. Holley**

We suggest that book of Haggai be read with great care. While we do not live under the law of the Old Testament, we can learn many profitable lessons from it (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11; Colossians 2:14-17).

The Babylonian Captivity had continued for 70 years. Cyrus had conquered Babylon and had permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. These Jews went to work and set up the altar, established daily sacrifices, and laid the foundation, but they did not finish their job. Sixteen years had now gone by. Haggai and Zechariah, two of God's prophets, were sent to get the Temple finished.

The people of Jerusalem were living in luxury -- in ceiled houses -- while God's house laid in waste (Haggai 1:4). What was Haggai's power to move people? It was the word of God. He used "saith Jehovah, "the word of Jehovah of hosts" and like expressions twenty-six times in his book. The gospel of Christ is God's power to save

sinners (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17). Gimmicks, however attractive, cannot get the job done. Dolly Parton, and other country-music stars can fill our buildings to overflowing, but what would it accomplish for the Lord and His church?

Dear Christian friends, it is time to take warning. Does your money go into bags with holes in them? Are you wasting your money?

(1) Haggai said, "Consider your ways." "You have sown much, but bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (Haggai 1:5-6, ASV).

Money that you spend on worldly pleasures goes into a bag with holes in it. If course, you need some relaxation and leisure in your life, but Christians do not live for pleasure only (Hebrews 11:24-26; I John 2:15-17). David the King is a classic example of one who allowed pleasure to control his life (II Samuel 12:13 ff; 24:10, 17; I Chronicles 21:8-17). For

example, fishing. A fine activity, yes, but not when you should be in the assembly of the saints (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-26). Which comes first, Alabama/Auburn football games? Your vacation? A baseball game? (Matthew 6:33).

(2) Those who spend their money for alcoholic beverages put their money in bags with holes in them. This writer watched a poor, ragged, scrawny, hungry couple, trying to decide what case of beer they could purchase. He then followed them to the check-out counter, and saw them give almost their last penny for that item. Why did they not buy food, or medicine, or clothes? (Please read Isaiah 5:11; 28:7-8; Proverbs 23:29-35; Galatians 5:19-21).

(3) Money spent to support and to promote human religious institutions is putting money into pockets with holes in them. It is true that (we wish to be fair) the Salvation Army, the Masons, denominational churches and the like, may do much moral good, but such monies cannot count in the Great Judgment. Only money contributed in

support of God's kingdom will be considered as treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:10; 21). Here, Jesus contrasts two treasures: one on earth, the other in heaven. One fails, the other continues throughout eternity! The heavenly treasure is in a bag with no holes in it (Philippians 4:19).

(4) Money withheld from the Lord when it could have been given to Him is money put into bags with holes in them. Ananias and Sapphira could have given what they said they gave to the Lord. In lying about their gift they lost it all (Acts 5:1-11). Barnabas, Acts 4:31-37, gave to the Lord and gained everything. Brethren, money spent to "keep up with the Joneses" cannot be spent for the service of Christ.

Barnabas is a far better example (Acts 4:31-37). He gave what he said he gave. How does God consider your use of your money? Think: One may live in a \$85,000 house, drive a \$20,000 car, buy a \$800 television, spend \$300 for a fishing trip, \$400 for a deer hunt, \$20 to watch a football game, but when he goes to church he gives \$5.00

to the Lord. We sincerely ask you to answer the following question: "Whose shall these things be?" (Luke 12:13-21).

Do you want to close up the holes in your pocket? We shall suggest some rules which never fail. (A) Recognize that you give to God what He has already given you (I Chronicles 29:14; Deuteronomy 8:17-18). (B) Give weekly as you have been prospered (I Corinthians 16:1-2); (C) Purpose in your heart to give, not grudgingly or of necessity, but because you love to support the Lord's church. (D) Resolve to give according to your ability (Acts 11:29). Remember, the money you give to the Lord is the money you save (Matthew 6:19-21). The remainder of your money will be left behind (I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19). (E) In giving be aware that you are "on the honor system." Be honest: Does what you give each Lord's Day truly represent what you were prospered?

You know and the Lord knows.

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

## The Use Of The Church Building

**Dub McClish**

The apostolic church enjoyed common meals together, called "love feasts" (I Peter 2:13; Jude 12).

Historians indicate that these meals took place immediately before or after worship and at the place of worship (as with our fellowship meals). With

the advance of apostasy following the apostolic period, the concept of sacredness of the church building evolved. By A.D.

397 this idea was made "church law" as the Council of Laodicea forbade any to eat or spread tables "in the house of God" (i.e. the

church building). Those today who oppose eating in the church building are not imitating the apostolic Continued On Page 4

## My Grandfather

**Vance Hutton**

My grandfather, Jerome Hutton, was a gospel preacher. He was born in 1875 and died from an accident in January 1935. He and his first wife had several children, some of which were quite young when she died. Later, he married my grandmother and to this union two sons were born. My father was six years old when Grandpa was killed. Grandpa undoubtedly knew many of the hardships and struggles

that are often characteristic of this life.

Much of the information I have concerning my grandfather is second hand. The people that knew him personally are a rapidly vanishing group of individuals that grows smaller each year. It amazes me though as to the number of places he left an influence. In many areas of Tennessee and Alabama, I have met folks who knew him. His name sometimes appears in

history sections of church directories where he labored or preached in meetings. Only this past week did a lady in Jasper send word that she knew him in the past.

Jerome Hutton evidently preached in many meetings and held numerous debates. As a very young man, he preached in a church he later came to realize he could not truly read about in his Bible. As a preacher in this denomination, he debated a Continued On Page 4

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**I love watermelon season. The humble watermelon is one of life's simplest and sweetest pleasures. They taste as good now as they did when I was a kid.**

**Hear the lesson of the seed: Though it contains the powerful gene of life it is bound by God's law. It can only produce after its kind. This watermelon seed will not produce tomatoes, or figs, or peaches. Only watermelons.**

**In Luke 8:11, in the parable of the farmer who sowed his seed, Jesus said "The seed is the word of God." The seed can only produce after its kind. When you plant God's word in the hearts of good and honest people, it will not produce sectarian, denominational religionists. It will produce Christians, and only Christians.**

**When a person is a member of a church you can't read about in your Bible, you can rest assured that it didn't come from the seed.**

## "What Is Man?" (No. 4)

Continued From Page 2  
in Romans 1:28-32. They rejected God and accepted every vice of depravity. Man is lonely and empty because he shuts out God. God made man and man will never experience meaning and contentment until he finds such in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. People feel fear, fright, loneliness and emptiness because of sin's guilt and not knowing how to remove it. The basic problem of humanity is sin, Sin, SIN!!! This is why Jesus came as

Redeemer. This is why He established Christianity on this sin-cursed earth. The next article, the final one in this series, will detail this matter more than present limitation allows.

The undeniable fact that man is a sinner and has fallen is Biblical teaching. Yet this conflicts with organic evolution. In his book, the Meaning Of Evolution, Professor George Gaylord Simpson says, in essence, on page 310, "Man has not fallen; he has risen." When this book came out more than

forty years ago, around 1950, it was hailed as the best work on evolution produced for that era. This is another major reason why no one, ABSOLUTELY NO ONE, can harmonize creation in Genesis with organic evolution.

Theistic evolutionists need to wake up and see how utterly silly they appear in seeking to ape the blatant ravings of militant evolutionists such as Simpson and his godless, atheistic colleagues. EVERY theistic evolutionist found in churches of Christ is a

disgrace before God, and I am deeply ashamed of EVERY ONE of them without exception. This goes double for so-called preachers who hue the theistic evolutionary line. It goes triple for professors in our colleges who hue this line due to the great influence they have and hold over our precious youth who are so vulnerable in this maturing part of their growth and development.

Creation and evolution are like the proverbial east and west -- never shall the twain

meet and merge. They cannot for they travel in opposite directions.

Unless man is a sinner, has fallen and needs redemption, NONE of which evolution accepts, the Bible's major message from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22 is robbed of all intelligent meaning and relevancy. If not, WHY NOT?

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

## My Grandfather

Continued From Page 3  
gospel preacher on the plan of salvation. After the debate that very night, he submitted to baptism for remission of his sins when he realized the truth must prevail. How many folks are that honest and sincere? That makes me respect the man I never met but hope to meet some day. He then attended what is now Freed-Hardeman University. The next many years would carry him preaching in meetings and debates over thousands of miles by horseback or mule and wagon. He was known as a man who knew the Bible and who could and would defend it.

Last week I received a copy of a newspaper article that he wrote in Buncombe, Illinois.

It appeared in the paper on July 3, 1900. That article follows this one.

He was 25 years old at the time. I hope you will read it with the love and respect for truth that my grandfather had when he penned it over 94 years ago. I do not know if Grandpa had the \$110 but I know from his prior life that he would have come up with it and would have changed if shown error in his belief and teaching. Colossians 3:17 teaches that all said and done is to be Bible based. The Lord's way of salvation is the only way (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Worship must be in accordance with truth (John 4:24). We will be judged by the word (John 12:48; Romans 2:16). This calls for us all to be students of the

word and then be anxious to apply it to our lives.

May the Lord richly bless as we strive to follow His will. I hope to see my grandfather some day. I hope you are there too. We all can be there if we will respect the Lord's will and humbly practice it in life.

### \$110 In Rewards

For the following  
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1. \$10 for a Bible quotation of Peter, Paul, James or John, or any other Apostle addressing a Baptist, Congregational, Lutheran or Methodist church.

2. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing where any person ever prayed, mourned, wept, and sought the Lord for days and weeks, and then went

away disappointed without finding the Lord.

3. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing that an alien can be saved outside the Church or body of Christ.

4. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing that God, Christ or the Holy Spirit is, or ever was, out in the world convicting and converting sinners independent of the Gospel of Christ.

5. \$10 for a Bible quotation where Christ or the Apostles demanded the baptism of an infant.

6. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing where an inspired man ever commanded prayer as a condition of pardon to the alien.

7. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing where any person ever got religion.

8. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing where feeling is an evidence of pardon and acceptance with God.

9. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing where a person was ever converted at a mourner's bench.

10. \$10 for a Bible quotation showing where an inspired man ever commanded an alien sinner to be sprinkled or poured for the remission of sins.

11. \$10 for a Bible quotation where an inspired man commanded Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists, etc., and sects everywhere to hold revivals and at the close divide the spoil.

J. M. Hutton - A servant of the Church.

--Runcombe, Ill., July 3, 1900.

## The Use Of The Church Building

Continued From Page 3  
church, but the apostate church!

Those who hold such a view commit at least two faults: (1) They view the building rather than the people as the church; (2) they make a law where God has not made one. The first of these may be due to ignorance of what the church really is. The second often arises from a brazen attempt to usurp the dominion of the Lord. Whether or not by intent, such folks are govern-

ed by the traditions of men rather than the Word of God, which the Lord clearly condemned (Matthew 15:16-19).

God does not live in any kind of building, including a church building: "The Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands" (Acts 7:48; 17:24). To eat food in a church building does not desecrate it; it is not God's temple to begin with. We, as God's people, are the temple, the dwelling place, of God (I

Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20). To misuse the body and its abilities is to desecrate God's temple (Luke 10:27; Romans 12:1-3).

Does not Paul's order that if one is hungry he should "eat at home" (I Corinthians 11:22-34) forbid eating in the church building? If so, it would mean that Priscilla and Aquilas (Romans 16:3-5) and others in whose homes the church met would have been both commanded and forbidden to eat in their

homes! Further, Paul included drinking as well as eating (I Corinthians 11:22). Strangely, those who object to eating in the building never object to a water fountain. Yet, it is clear that they stand or fall together.

An honest consideration of the context will reveal that Paul is not addressing the right or wrong use of the Lord's building, but of the Lord's Supper. He directed his rebuke at the practice of making the Lord's Supper

into a gluttonous physical meal, which is what we would have to do to duplicate the abuse Paul addressed.

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September 30, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Grown Children Who Leave The Lord
- "Love My Enemies?"
- "What Is Man?" (No. 5)
- Policy Exclusions
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Forgotten Ingredient In Christian Growth
- Terminal Destination

Volume 30 Number 40  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Truth

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

the

## You And Eternity

**Johnny Ramsey**

Few words touch the heartstrings like the beautiful expressions of "immortality" and "eternity." Scarcely anyone can sincerely say that he is disinterested in what transpires after death. The Bible is the only book that truly lifts the veil of the great beyond; God's Book transcends earth's sorrows and tells us of "the land that is fairer than day."

Every religious person feels the need of doing something about eternity. The universalist conveniently affirms that all will be saved. The skeptic states that none will be lost. The so-called

"Jehovah's Witnesses" strive to take the sting out of hell while retaining the bliss of eternal life. Mohammed told his followers that a perpetual Utopia awaited the faithful Moslem; a paradise where he would be attended by "seventy-two black-eyed maidens."

Friends, the hope of a Christian far surpasses any of the foregoing. We do not look for a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, nor for a fountain of youth or a place of materialistic prestige. The humble child of God just strives to so live here on earth that one day heaven might be his eternal abiding place.

*Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.* Read John 14.

Death holds no pangs of remorse for the Christian. Notice these passages: "For me to live is Christ; to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21); "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13); "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory (over death) through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57). *Are you a Christian?*

No soldier of Christ should ever be ashamed to present God's message even unto kings (Psalm 119:46). Our

spirits should stir within us as we observe the idolatry of the nations (Acts 17:16). This should propel us into world evangelism as it did the early Christians (Acts 5:42; 8:4).

Today, how can we keep silent concerning the horrendous divorce rate in America and around the world since "God hates divorce?" (Malachi 2:16). How can we be quiet on the subject of illicit sex and pornography when we know that only the pure in heart shall see God? (Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 13:4). Why are we so reluctant (remember Jonah) to cry out against the loss of so many of our young

people to the works of the flesh? (Galatians 5:19-21). Across the land the words of II Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1 should echo and vibrate loud and clear:

Come out from among them and be ye separate . . . cleanse yourselves of all defilement of the flesh and spirit . . .

How can we be silent when eternity is in view and the souls of men are dying in sin? Let us obey Jude 3 and contend earnestly for the faith. Cowards to the rear, please!

## Do Children Have Rights?

**Floyd Rodgers**

Many of you shall pick up this paper, read it, and say, "Yes, children do have rights."

I want each of you to watch and listen to the evening news. Listen to how many children are being killed or are going to jail. Someone may say, "What do we have to do with that?" If you are a parent of children, or if there are children on whom you exert influence, then the answer is "very much."

We all ask ourselves, "Just what has happened to our children today?" Let me suggest these problems:

First, fathers and mothers are often not being

responsible parents. The children are having to play the parent role. (Notice I said, "Play the parent role.")

Second, too many single parent homes are being created. There are many reasons, but a common outcome: at least one of the parents will not be able to accept their full responsibility as a parent.

Third, children are often being abused and misused by parents, or guardians, or by people who don't care.

Friends, God has set a plan in which we as adults should rear our children. He has given this Word to us and all we have to do is read it, hear it, and keep it. Revelation 1:3

says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

I recently received a letter from a young lady who is in prison. In her letter she talked about how she had been treated by her parents. This young lady is incarcerated for stealing. According to the letter, when her friends were attending church services, her parents made her stay home because they themselves did not want to attend. Why? Because they felt it was hard for them to get out of bed. During the days that she attended school she had to

walk, their reasoning being the same. When she needed supplies for school, they refused to get them for her. This need moved her to stealing. At the age of sixteen, she became pregnant. Of course we know what happened next; she quit school. After giving birth to her baby, she began to receive food stamps. Guess what. Her father and mother once again took from her. The young lady resorted again to stealing to provide for herself and her baby. At the end of the letter she said, "Brother Rodgers, help me to be a better parent."

This letter touched me because today I see children being misused by parents. Do

you know of any children treated this way? Have you ever seen a child that wanted to go to church and couldn't because parents would not let them?

As Christians we have a great responsibility. Consider the following outline for parents and their children:

### I. HOW SHOULD CHILDREN BE REARED?

1. (Genesis 1:27, 28) BY THE FATHER AND MOTHER. God wants Men and Women to accept their responsibilities in child rearing. After all, it took both to get the child and it makes sense that it takes both to raise them (I Corinthians 11:3).  
Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Grown Children Who Leave The Lord

Glenn Colley

Although relatively few pages of scripture are devoted to the discussion of Eli, rich and important lessons are taught by his example. This high priest was living a double life. He was seeing to his duties in the Tabernacle, and giving spiritual guidance to the worshippers, (I Samuel 1) but he was also wrestling with corruption in his family that was slowly infecting him.

Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests by birth, not by character. They were described as "sons of Bellai," which means they were worthless men and corrupt.

God had given the law which provided adequately for the priests. They were to receive part of the sacrificed meat for their own table (Leviticus 7:29-34). Hophni and Phinehas wanted more. In addition to the prescribed amount, these priests developed a custom in which a three-toothed fleshhook was struck into the pot of seething meat, and pulled out. They took that meat too. As if that wasn't enough, they also demanded meat to be given them before the fat was burned away. When the worshipper would protest, (for this was a clear violation of God's will, Leviticus 7:31), the priest of his servant would answer him, "Nay, but thou shalt give it me now; and if not, I will take it by force."

These corrupt sons of Eli didn't stop with profaning God's offerings. I Samuel 2:22 says that they "lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." It would

have been bad enough for them to defile themselves with prostitutes, but they compounded the sin by seducing the women at the house of God! They treated god like he was of no more value, and worthy of no more reverence, than the dunghill deities of the idol worshippers.

Now consider Eli's reaction. This is important, and determined the way Eli was judged by God. I Samuel 3:13 says, "In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." He could have restrained them! He was their father. He was high priest, and responsible for making sure the activities of the tabernacle were properly carried out. He was the judge, and had the power to cast them from the camp. But he didn't. Why not?

Consider three possibilities:

First, he may have been afraid. After all, the sons had threatened the worshippers of God who got in their way. Perhaps they had treated Eli their father this way as well.

Second, Eli may have felt guilty. Perhaps he reflected on those fleeting years of his sons' youth when he failed to be as involved in their lives as he should have been. He may have felt that he had no right now to stop what he believed he himself helped to start. The boomerang of parental indulgence may

have been flying back and smacking him!

Third, he may have been working on a foolish parental scheme to bring them back to their senses. Sometimes parents do this today. When their grown children leave the Lord they tiptoe around discussions of their sin. Parents may even gradually alter their views of those particular sins so as to justify their children. "Isn't this natural?", you might ask. No. It may be an obvious temptation, but it isn't good. God's disappointment and anger was raised against Eli.

Eli's lack of restraint of his sons becomes even clearer when we read I Samuel 2:29. A prophet speaks for God to Eli, "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel My people?" There it is. Eli was going along with his sons. God lumps the three of them together in His rebuke.

In one day, Eli and his sons are dead. God had said, "Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house . . . And I will raise Me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in Mine heart and in My mind . . ."

Parents, regardless of what your children do as adults, stand for Christ and His truth. We don't do our grown children any favors by tip-toeing around their

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## "Love My Enemies?"

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"I know the Bible says that we should love our enemies, but I'm not sure that's possible for me. It's hard to feel good about those people who are mean and unkind. What can I do?"

I appreciate your honesty as well as the question you pose. May I make three suggestions?

1. Develop a better understanding of the love to which Jesus mentioned. Much of your frustration with this command may be a result of confusing loving and liking. We tend to use the word "love" in a very broad sense today. We use it to describe our feelings about things like ice cream, pickup trucks and little brown puppies. But when Jesus said "love your enemies," He was not saying that we must have warm, affectionate feelings toward people who hurt and mistreat us. Rather, He was telling us to act right toward others, regardless of how they behave toward us.

2. Look to God's love as the MODEL for the love you are to exhibit. Paul said, "But God demonstrates His own

love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ." (John 3:16).

3. Realize that you are not told how to FEEL about your enemies, but you are told how to ACT toward them.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45a). Paul added, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men . . . Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:18, 20-21). Study also Luke 10:25-37.

--P.O. Box 346, Adairsville, GA 30103.



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# "What Is Man?" (No. 5)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

"What is man?" is both an Old and New Testament question (Job: 7:17; Psalms 8:4; 144:4; Hebrews 2:6). Note of the question has been taken from a number of negatives and then a positive look. To date under the positive I have suggested that man is a creature made in God's image/likeness and that he is a fallen being, a sinner, a transgressor of the divine will for his lot and life on earth. He is a sinner not by inheritance or birth but by the very fact that he has transgressed in his own person the laws of God Almighty. I now suggest two other answers in our concluding literary pursuit.

"What is man?" He is an object of God's love and care. John 3:16, the Golden Text of the Bible, says it plainly, powerfully and penetratingly, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As speaker in Acts 14:17 and as scribe in Romans 5:8 Paul expressed the momentous matter respectively and with spiritual punch and power,

Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us

rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Inspired James eloquently expressed the matter this way with wisdom permeating each syllable, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). An abundance of other Scriptures could be marshalled along this same beautiful line but these should be sufficient for necessary proof.

But again, "What is man?" Man is a potential recipient of God's grace, a prospective Christian, a possible child of the living God on holy high. In Ephesians 2:8 Paul wrote of our being saved by God's grace and our obedient response to the gospel of God's only begotten Son. We are not saved by grace alone; we are not saved by faith alone. We are saved by grace and faith. In Titus 3:7 we note, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." In Galatians 1:4 and Titus 2:14 Paul spoke of

the Christ who gave himself for us in order that he might redeem us from sin, from all iniquity. In Galatians 3:26, 27 Paul wrote, "For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Salvation is positioned. Where? In Christ! On what condition? The culminating step in obedience to Christ is baptism. Baptism puts us into Christ; a life of faithfulness keeps us so situated. Minus baptism we will NEVER be in Christ; minus a life of loyalty to Him we cannot possibly remain safe and secure in Him. I like the ASV rendering of Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ." Note Paul's razor-sharp logic at work here. You did if you were. Did what? Put on Christ. Were what? Were baptized into Him. The converse would be: You did put not Him on if you were not baptized (immersed) into Him. Night no more follows day than putting on Christ follows being baptized into Him.

Jesus came to pay our debts. He came to bear within His own body our sins. He became a sin bearer as Paul

sets forth in II Corinthians 5:21. Christ, the altogether Righteous One, came to bear our sins in order that we, the unrighteous ones, might be treated as if we had never sinned. This is what justification is all about. And we can be justified (have all our sins acquitted) by the marvelous means of gospel obedience initially and continually by a faithful walk in Jesus and His gloriously great word of truth (Mark 16:16; I John 1:7). Because of what He has done for us at Calvary then Jesus has every right to demand of us what we must do in order to be saved. He is in the driver's seat all the way in this momentous matter of commanding us what we must do. He demands that we hear, believe Him to be God's only begotten Son, repent of sins, confess faith in Him and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 4:23; John 8:21, 24; Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Then He requires faithfulness through life of all of us (Matthew 10:22; Hebrews 5:8, 9; Revelation 2:10). The latter passage demands that we even die for our faith rather than recant it.

During the War Between The States, the 1860's, there

were various responses a young man could employ when summoned for the military. He could go. Another could go in his place. A family man, with wife and several children to support, received his summons to report. He was about 28 years of age. A much younger man who was single learned of it and immediately went to the husband/father and insisted on going in his place. He said, "I have no wife, I have no children. Please allow me to go in your place. You stay here and provide for your family." The older man did not like this. It went against his patriotic sense of duty. The younger man was insistent and the older man reluctantly consented. A short time later the young man was slain in a fierce battle. His body was shipped back home for burial. Over his grave his benefactor erected a tombstone with the epitaph, "He died in my place!" In a far higher sense we can say of our sacrificial Saviour, "He died in our place."

Fallen man can be redeemed man now and saved-in-heaven in yonder's world.

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

## Policy Exclusions

**Glenn Colley**

Insurance companies, eager to drum up business, often mass-mail flyers advertising their low rates and quality product. The small print on one recently caught my eye. It said in part, "This insurance does not cover any loss caused . . . from suicide . . . any act of war, declared or undeclared, air travel accident . . . voluntary inhaling of gas . . . taking part in a riot or civil insurrection; sky diving, scuba, skin, or deep sea diving; or hang gliding; moving vehicle accident

occurring while you are engaged in a contest of speed, organized or not; the influence of any drug, sedative, narcotic or intoxicant unless prescribed by a physician; or taking part in or trying to commit a felony."

Sometimes people jokingly refer to me as an "insurance salesman" because as a preacher, I encourage people to plan for their future even after their death.

But, as your insurance agent, I feel obligated to inform you of some policy exclusions. The future benefits offered by Christ,

who I represent in my preaching, will not be given to those who die while away from the Lord in practices such as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like." Also, idolaters, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, extortioners are excluded (Galatians 5:19-21, I Corinthians 6:9-10).

Please make a mental note of these exclusions.

## "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

Recently I received a letter from a woman who listens to the Most of a Minute. Here is an interesting quote from that letter:

**"As I strive to do the right things in life, I get so discouraged. But, I like to think of the confederate cemetery I visited in Franklin, TN. It has row after row of little crosses of the soldiers who gave their life there. It brought tears to my eyes, when I heard a man telling about the ragged, young men who just kept coming over the line even though the Union army had the stronghold. Their heart was set, never to give up at any cost, even their life.**

**That is the way we must feel about following Jesus Christ. The devil may have the stronghold on this earth but we can never give up till our life is over. I can never stop trying to live a Christian life, because I have my heart set on going to heaven."**

**Revelation 2:10 -- Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."**

# Do Children Have Rights?

Continued From Page 1

12) "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God."

2. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) **ACCORDING TO THE WORD.** Moses exhorts Israel to hear God and keep his commandments. God is talking to those that can understand or the adults. Moses tells them what God expects of them as people and then he tells them what to do for their children. When parents teach their children what God expects, they will be able to rest a little better.

a. **When teaching according to the word,** we teach who is most important (Matthew 6:33). "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto

you."

b. **When teaching according to the word,** there is a certain interest provided. That interest is **SPIRITUAL**, then and only then will children learn that there is something more than a materialistic life. (Matthew 4:4) ". . . It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

c. **When teaching according to the word,** we show that life is very important (John 10:10) ". . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

3. (I John 4:19) **ACCORDING TO LOVE.** Before anyone can love, they must first have experienced love. (John 13:34, 35) Jesus commanded His disciples to

love one another as He had loved them and by doing so, all men would know that they were His disciples. All of Jesus' disciples had experienced His love. By experiencing this love, they could share what they had experienced. Children should know this type of love and share it with someone else. (Matthew 22:39) ". . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It's sad but many don't love themselves. Before one can love his neighbor, he must love self. They don't love self because they haven't experienced that love from parents.

II. HOW SHOULD CHILDREN RESPOND?

1. (Proverbs 10:1; Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1, 2) **BY BEING OBEDIENT.** Children that come up

knowing the word of God are more respectable to God, their Parents, and to all that they come in contact with.

2. (Matthew 10:37) **BY LOVING GOD SUPREME.** Children that are taught God's word, will know by being obedient that faithfulness will show God that he/she loves Him and not only Him, but parents.

3. (I John 2:15-17) **BY NOT LOVING THE WORLD.** Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life has caused many people and especially children to lose the best days of their life.

Friends, when I pick up the Word of God and see how we as adults should (1) teach - (Deuteronomy 6:7), (2) train - (Proverbs 22:6), (3) provide for - (II Corinthians 12:14), (4) nurture - (Ephesians 6:4),

and (5) love - (Titus 2:4) our children, I understand that God has entrusted a great responsibility to us. It's not something that we should take lightly. Parents don't keep your children from learning about God. We will become better parents when we learn to talk with our children instead of always talking to our children. If you remember one thing about this article, remember this: (Ezekiel 18:4) **"BEHOLD, ALL SOULS ARE MINE;** as the soul of the Father, so also the soul of the Son is mine: The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

--P.O. Box 3153, Jasper, AL 35502.

## The Forgotten Ingredient In Christian Growth

Brian K. Giselbach

One of the things that ought to concern every Christian is his own individual growth. Spiritual growth is one of the greatest obligations we have as Christians. Peter exhorted us to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). The reason why growth is so important is explained by Peter in the proceeding verse: "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." In the context, Peter was telling us how possible it was for us to be deceived by false teachers who "wrest" the Scriptures "unto their own destruction," and no less, to the destruction of others. Therefore, growth is an important concern to every serious minded Christian. Growth in Christ is

a safeguard and deterrent against those who would lead us away from the faith.

But there are other ways by which we can fall from our own steadfastness. We can fall away through the indifference and concern we may have regarding the needs of the church, the needs of others, and the needs of our own lives. Many people have very little contact with false teachers. Yet they have fallen away because of their own personal lack of interest in the things which lead to life eternal. Recently, I heard an individual say about another person: "John (Not his real name) doesn't come to church like he ought to, but I wish he would. I've seen a lot of changes in his life since he became a Christian fifteen years ago. He is really growing as a Christian, but you must remember, growth

takes time." I couldn't help but wonder; how much time does it take for a person to grow to the point that he begins to fulfill his Christian obligations? How long must a person be a Christian before he is expected to attend services like he should? How long must a person be a Christian before he is expected to make an effort to win someone to Christ? How long must a person be a Christian before he is expected to live a life of purity? Don't take me wrong, it is obvious that individual growth takes time. But how long must the mission of the church go unfulfilled before "John" grows up in the faith and begins making his own contribution? If "John" has been a Christian for fifteen years and is still not attending services like he should, can we honestly

believe that he is growing as a Christian?

Apparently when we talk about Christian growth, we're leaving something out. We have forgotten perhaps the single most important ingredient: **DESIRE!** Every person who puts on Christ in baptism will eventually fall from his own steadfastness without a personal desire for spiritual growth. This "I want to grow" attitude is crucial! This is why Peter commanded Christians to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I Peter 2:2, 3). The Lord has been so gracious in saving us from our sins! Now that we have tasted of that grace, let us grow in grace. In order to grow, we must desire that which produces and enhances growth, God's

Word. Do you have this essential ingredient in your life? The author of the first Psalm expressed the correct attitude, when he said: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:2, 3). What a beautiful picture of growth; a tree that is alive, growing, and bringing forth fruit. Why? Because of a desire for growth that expresses itself through the delight and meditation of God's Word. Desire is the forgotten ingredient in Christian growth!

--Brian Giselbach preaches for the Lord's church in Cincinnati, Ohio.

## Terminal Destination

Dale Jenkins

It had been another long but successful mission trip. Almost all of our objectives had been met. And we were tired. We'd not had a lot of sleep for the past 72 hours, the wear of long travel, long hours teaching and just being away from home (It's hard to sleep in a strange place) was

getting to me. The lady at the ticket counter in Austria spoke with a strong accent. "What is your terminal destination?", she asked. I suppose I'd heard the question a hundred times, but I'd never heard it like that before. ". . . terminal destination."

"Well, I guess heaven." She gave me one of those, "it's been

a long day and don't mess with me looks."

"Memphis, Tennessee."

I suppose people answer that question all the time. "I'm going to Nashville to see my grandparents." "I'm just business commuting." "I'm on my way home for holidays." "I'm traveling to a new home in

Chicago." "I'm going to Boston to see my dad."

But it got me to wondering about you dear reader, "What is your terminal destination?" You see, we are all "terminal" and we are all headed somewhere. So, where are you ultimately headed on this flight called life? And does your answer match the way

you are living?

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27 KJV). ". . . we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10 KJV).

--Hamilton, AL.

October 7, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- One God, One Faith
- Letters To Three Churches
- The Christian Fleet
- The Sin Of Gossip
- Do You Fear The Lord?

Volume 31 Number 41  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Five Hundred Times Through The New Testament

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Today, August 29, 1994, I have completed reading the New Testament five hundred times. Almost seventeen years ago I penned an article for Words of Truth on "Three Hundred Times Through The New Testament." Many read that article and began their own reading of the New Testament once a month. Perhaps this current article will motivate others to pursue a similar policy. This is why I write it.

Here is how I came to adopt this particular plan. I had a roommate at Freed Hardeman College, now University, during 1950-51, by the name of Coleman K. Allmond. His father was the late Hugo Allmond, a fine, sound and dedicated preacher of the gospel and one who greatly helped me as a beginning preacher. Coleman happened to mention to me one day that his father made it a practice to read through the New Testament once a month. That thought lingered with me for awhile and then became like "an idea whose time had come." The very month Irene and I married, September, 1952, I began the

practice of reading through the New Testament once a month and the Old Testament once a year. I have now finished the Old Testament forty-two times and the New Testament five hundred times.

Nine chapters in the New Testament and three chapters in the Old Testament will put one through the New Testament a dozen times annually and once through the Old Testament yearly. I do four in the gospel records and Acts, each book, except John, is divisible by four and I read five one day in John, and five in the epistles and Revelation. This puts me through in twenty-nine days. All months fit this reading plan except February with its twenty-eight days, except for leap years. One day in February calls for a double-up. Three a day in the Old Testament will put one through that major segment of Scripture and even allow several days missed during the course of the year and still put one through during the year.

Someone may say, "What happens when you get behind?" It requires make-up

reading. In fact, it does not take too much of this make-up of having to read eighteen a day or twenty-seven a day to motivate one to keep up daily with the prescribed plan. A pioneer preacher once said that if he planned to give a certain amount on Sunday and became tempted to cut back, he just doubled the proposed amount. That soon eliminated that type of temptation to lessen up on one's liberality to the Lord! The same principle works here. If I miss nine New Testament chapters today, I know eighteen lie before me tomorrow to get back on schedule.

What benefits accrue such a plan? (1) It keeps one with the Book daily and helps him to be a modern Berean (Acts 17:11). Every hour I spend with the Bible kills a vice or allows a virtue in to fight that vice. (2) It keeps every verse, paragraph, chapter and book in proper context. (3) It breeds an ever growing familiarity with verses and chapters one might not study for a sermon or in pursuit of a Bible topic. (4) It keeps one under the power of God's word. I have heard the

founding father of Words Of Truth, brother Gus Nichols, say more than one that one of the reasons we need to read the Bible regularly is to stay under its power. (5) It enhances memorization. It is just easier to memorize what one has read again and again. (6) It introduces people to many rich gems of truth that other forms or plans of Bible Study might cause them to miss for a lifetime. (7) It enables one to walk daily with patriarchs, prophets, kings, priests, great preachers like John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the apostles, the evangelists, righteous youth, godly women and a host of God's people left nameless such as the women who helped Paul at Philippi or the two elect sisters mentioned by John in his second epistle.

This is but one aspect of my daily study of the Bible but it is an essential one. I know only too well that words, sentences, verses, paragraphs, chapters and entire books need to be studied closely and exegeted with reverent accuracy. Topical studies need to be pursued which I often prosecute. The many aids to

Bill \_\_\_\_\_ ed to be pursued with fullness of advantage.

Brother Guy N. Woods once told me that some of the most fruitful studies of his life were in his debate preparation and the thirty or more years he wrote the GA Adult Quarterly. I can relate to the latter having written GA material for the past several years.

The thousands of hours I have spent in reading the Bible daily for forty-two years and memorizing ten or more Scriptures each day for nearly forty-five years have been some of the most fruitful areas of my Bible Study. Both of these have been of inestimable value in the conducting of hundreds of Open Forum or Question and Answer sessions I have done for so long.

Why not join the twelve-a-day club of Bible readers in your own study of God's word? After a while such will be as much a part of your daily activities as the eating of three meals each day. I recommend the plan to you.

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

## Keynote Verses From Daniel 1-6

Glenn Colley

1:8 --"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank ..."

2:28 --"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,

and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

3:16 --"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter."

4:37 --"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

5:17 --"Then Daniel answered and said before the

King, 'Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.'"

6:10 -- "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his

house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## One God, One Faith

Glenn Colley

Christians take very seriously the fact that every man and every woman in every nation are responsible to the same God. The Bible contains the phrase, "All nations" fifty four times. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, 35), and all people are today responsible to Him. "Free-thinkers" not withstanding, the scripture still reads, "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:3, 4)."

In our "toleration above all" thinking of the '90's we may forget a simple and logical chain of thought. Namely this:

1. If it is the case that not all men are to be subject to the same God, and may choose other gods and other religions, and eventually go to realms of heavenly bliss, then,

2. It is also the case that NO ONE should follow the God of the Bible. For the God of the Bible says the opposite, that is, that there is only one God for all mankind, and only one hope by which people can be saved. If He is untruthful then He is unworthy of our trust.

In other words, we can't have it both ways. Either He is the only true God with the only true faith for all people, or He isn't true to His word and none should follow Him.

Recently in Kirkland, Washington, in a fifth grade class at Mark Twain Elementary School, the students were instructed to submit their answer to this question: "If you had three wishes, what would they be, and if you could meet anyone, whom would you want to meet?" Little Matt Piccora wrote that he wished for "infinitely more wishes," "to meet God," and "for all of my friends to be Christians." He added that the reason he wanted to meet God was "because He is the one who made us!"

Upon seeing the paper, the teacher for the class asked Matt to add "if they want to be" to the last response. With regard to the statement about God being our creator, she asked him to add, "in my opinion."

In defense of her actions, the teacher pointed out that the assignment was to teach students to express a thought. They were expected to make revisions in their work to make the writing appropriate for a general audience. She told her students that an appropriate statement was one that was mindful of others and that respected the diversity of the audience. According to Matt's mother, the teacher "was talking about how she believed in diversity in class, and how Matt was putting himself above the other students and hurting their feelings. . ."

These excerpts are included in this article to

make this point: Christians must not allow themselves to be affected by this kind of "politically correct" thinking that ultimately distorts the truth of God's word! It is true that the universal nature of the Bible is offensive to those who disbelieve God's teachings. How should we react to that discomfort? "We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)" What God calls black or white I must not call "gray."

Let our society and our world change as they will, but God's word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35). Whether we live or die, succeed or fail, live in palaces or ghettos, there will only be one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is above all and through all, and in all. It's truth which stands unbending and untarnished from one generation to the next. Psalm 100:5 says, "His truth endureth to all generations."

John G Whittler wrote, and we sing,

"Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways;  
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,  
in purer lives Thy service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise."

# Letters To Three Churches

Johnny Ramsey

In the third chapter of Revelation we have personal letters from the Lord to churches in Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Two of those congregations were sternly rebuked while only the smallest and poorest, Philadelphia, was praised. We can learn valuable lessons from each of these missives that can propel us into a closer walk with God.

First of all we learn that Sardis had a grand reputation among men but a zero character rating from the Savior. Only a few there had remained loyal and pure while the vast majority were on the verge of having their names blotted out of the book of life by the very Redeemer they claimed to serve so graciously. Pompous pretending and extravagant polish cannot replace basic dependability and sincere service. In our fast-paced society today some brethren truly need to learn that the praise of men will never replace the confidence our Maker has in devoted saints who never weary in well-doing (Galatians 1:10; 6:9). The readers of this third stanza of Revelation also learn that names once entered in the Lamb's book of life can later be removed due to immorality and arrogance. No tragedy compares to the loss of acceptability before the Creator. No carnal delight

even comes close to the value of spiritual progress in the Master's blessed cause. Every time I read the letter to Sardis I remember the message of Paul to Timothy concerning an evil person "who was dead while she liveth" (I Timothy 5:6). What we think of ourselves and what others may think pales into nothing in contrast with what God knows (I Corinthians 4:1-5). The One who searches our hearts has the proper evaluation (Acts 1:24). E. V. Kelley has a brilliant verse on this penetrating point:

"Take my life and make it pure

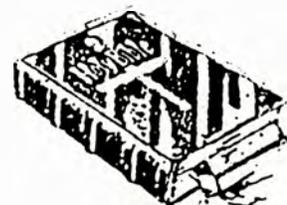
Free and sinless for my King

O what peace to be secure  
Beneath the shadow of Thy wing

Keep my heart from anxious fear

Hide me gently, Savior dear,  
Beneath the shadow of Thy wing."

The letter to the church of Philadelphia, in Asia Minor, is a classic reminder that God sees things differently than sinful mankind (Isaiah 55:8). It is truly interesting that spiritual values cannot be weighed on the scales of the world. Here was a small church in a little town in a miserable location, geographically, in the Roman Empire, and yet the Lord opened doors for them to be tremendously successful in  
Continued On Page 4



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# The Christian Fleet

**M. Floyd Bailey, Jr.**

If you have ever been to a shipyard, you cannot help but be amazed at the size of our greatest sea-going vessels. It is bewildering that hundreds of tons of iron and steel can float on the ocean's surface and face the roughest of seas. These great beasts of burden move through the water with grace and majesty.

With these thoughts in mind, let us focus our attention on the greatest of ships. They are the ships we find in the Bible, and they are a part of the Christian fleet.

## FELLOW-SHIP

The first time we read about this ship is in connection with the beginning of the church. Luke wrote, "And they continued breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Truly, this fellow-ship is a beautiful vessel of good. This ship puts us in contact with the Son, for we "are called unto the fellowship of his Son" (I Corinthians 1:9). It gives us a relationship with the Father (I John 1:3), and it gives the church a bond and unity, if

we "walk in the light" (I John 1:7). This ship is one of the Christian fleet that will keep us afloat as we face the rough seas of our voyage through life. If you're not a part of the church of Christ's fellow-ship, you'd better get on board before you miss the boat!

## WORSHIP

This vessel has been a part of the lives of God-fearing people since the beginning of time. Cain and Abel came to God with sacrifice to worship their Creator (Genesis 4:1-ff). It is here in the beginning that we recognize God expects man to worship Him according to His divine guidelines. There are many worships in the world's religions and denominations, but only one is designed after God's will; thus we read, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Is your worship designed after God's pattern (Joshua 22:28; Hebrews 8:5)? If not, your ship is sinking fast!

## DISCIPLE-SHIP

Boarding this boat is an absolute must if we are going to

be a child of God. Andrew had been a disciple of John the baptizer (John 1:35), but when John announced, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (v. 36), the text says that he and another followed Jesus. Thus we have the definition of a disciple, one who follows after another. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). We recognize that being a disciple involves a self-denial and an humble bowing of our will to God's will in submission to the Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The word of God enlightens us (John 8:31-32). We are then moved to obedience which sets us free (Romans 6:17-18; cf. John 8:32); therefore we must see that our obedience, not just simple mental assent, makes us a disciple (cf. Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46). It is obedience to that "form of doctrine" (Romans 6:17) which is described in verses 1-6 of Romans 6. When we obey the command, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ

for the remission of your sins..." (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21) is when we become true disciples.

The disciples of Jesus' day followed Him day by day (Luke 9:23). So must we, in daily study (Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15); daily submission (I Corinthians 15:31); daily fellowship with the church (Acts 2:46), etc. If you are not a disciple of Jesus, you are following the wrong master (Luke 16:13), and you will go down with the ship.

Webster defines "fleet" as "a number of warships under a single command." We have noticed the vessels of battle with which we "war a good warfare" (I Timothy 1:18). Our fellow-ship, wor-ship, and disciple-ship create a fleet for us that can sail the seven seas and carry the precious cargo of men's souls into eternity. All aboard!

--1705 Starview Drive, Salem, VA 24153.

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# The Sin Of Gossip

**Stephen Wiggins**

Gossip is a sin. Jehovah said in the long ago: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." Later, the same warning continues: "And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house, and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." What the apostles had in mind here was those giddy-minded female tattletales who, rather than

redeeming their time in the Lord's Cause, busy themselves with empty chatter by "speaking things which they ought not." Is not this God's divine definition of a gossipy talebearer? It is.

A gossip is that newsy person who habitually babbles the latest and juiciest prattle about another. It is a fact that we have way too many pious church-going gossipers today who, having been baptized in the spirit of the Athenians, spend "their

time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Is it not true that "the tongue is a fire, the world of iniquity among our members?" The Bible says so. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Following are some directives that every Christian should do to help purge out the old leaven of gossip that we may be a new lump.

Continued On Page 4

# Do You Fear The Lord?

**B. J. Clarke**

I am not asking if you are terrified of God. There is a tremendous misunderstanding in the minds of most people concerning what is truly involved in fearing Jehovah. The Bible speaks of two types of fear.

First, there is the fear forbidden (Genesis 15:1; Exodus 14:13; Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:32). In all of these passages and hundreds more, individuals are instructed to refrain from

fearing certain men or afflictions brought on by men. These are comforting assurances of God's protective watchcare over his faithful followers.

Second, there is the fear commanded. "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). This verse does not demand that we be filled with a dread and fright of God. It rather speaks of fear in the sense of deep-seated reverence and

respect for the authority of God as the rightful ruler of the Universe. It was this kind of godly fear that moved Noah to prepare an ark for the saving of his household (Hebrews 11:7). His example is worthy!

But, how can I know if I fear the Lord? Am I supposed to build an ark like Noah? While we are not obligated to do specifically what Noah did, we are required to imitate his general attitude towards Continued On Page 4

# Letters To Three Churches

Continued From Page 2  
 heaven's sight. In the first century persecution and opportunity for Christians often co-existed (I Corinthians 16:9). If we are faithful to do the best we can with what we have, the Master will bless us, use us and save us (Mark 10:30). It is when we are blessed beyond measure but choose to live beneath our privileges that God counts us as failures. Just ask Cain, Solomon and the one talent man! Some of the greatest congregations I have known in these 35 years of preaching, have been small country churches that love and support the gospel, percentage-wise, far beyond

many big, fancy, metropolitan congregations that "claim to be somewhat" to apply Paul's language of Galatians 2. In the Judgment Day we may be tremendously surprised to learn of God's list of great congregations!

But, it is the third epistle in this powerful chapter that is the one remembered through the years. What a pitiful congregation existed in the luxuriant city of Laodicea. Pomp, wealth, prestige and beauty all were ascribed to the city by its neighbors. An industrial mecca, known for garments, medicine, self-sufficiency and grandeur, was Laodicea. Sadly, they had everything but Christ and thus, they had nothing! Jesus

told the brethren there:

"You make me sick."

Their lukewarmness in spiritual matters contrasted vividly with their red-hot business prowess. Indifferent were they to the demands of a healthy soul though they sold the best medicinal remedies for the body. Naked were they -- in spiritual shame -- though they sold the finest garments of wool for physical, mundane society! Putting God first was a light thing to them (Ezekiel 8:17) as they nonchalantly passed by heavenly matters to ardently pursue treasures of earthly lore (Lamentations 1:12; II Timothy 3:4). There are still a lot of folk from Laodicea in Texas and

Tennessee -- in the church! What a miserable emphasis, what a sad, hopeless condition.

As the third chapter of Revelation draws to its dramatic close we learn four vibrant, necessary lessons.

(1) The Lord has spoken plainly and rebuked firmly because of His love for the church. Discipline was needed then and is still imperative now.

(2) He will not force himself upon us but does tenderly knock upon the door of our heart to encourage us to open and let Him in that we might allow heaven's will to dominate our thinking.

(3) If we will overcome the weakness of the flesh (I John

2:15-17) we can come over to live with the Savior.

(4) We must humbly pay attention to the message of the Bible as revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles (John 16:13).

Let us put aside, therefore, stubborn prideful thinking and worldly esteem of shallow people as we strive to do God's will and walk in the way that leads home to glory! Joseph Addison poignantly wrote:

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
 My rising soul surveys,  
 Transported with the view  
 I'm lost in the wonder, love  
 and praise."

## The Sin Of Gossip

Continued From Page 3

First, let all freely acknowledge that gossip is a heinous crime and sorely displeasing to the Maker. The initial step in developing true Christian character is that of exercising our senses to discern between good and evil. But does not the Book inform us that sin is the transgression of divine law? It does. And, does not the gabby burble of godless gossip dance to the tune of sinful demeanor? This, no one will deny. Then let us strip ourselves of all timidity and robe our minds with enough fortitude to recognize it as such. Satan and his hellish henchmen shall be the only losers when we play the game as God would have us.

Second, let us all resolve to never budge our tongues to commit that mouthy sin of gossip. It is one thing to acknowledge such as sin but quite another to make the

determined decision to rid it from our lives. All too often we fancy ourselves to be safe in the arms of Jesus by merely refraining from the so-called "big" sins. Little or no thought is given toward our responsibility to "abstain from EVERY form of evil" as the Master bids. Know that sin has the insidious ability to couch at the door of our hearts patiently awaiting entrance so as to corrupt us from within. "But do thou rule over it" is the Divine directive that successfully applies to overcoming any and all sin. How much more to the sin of gossip chatter?

Third, let all determine to never even listen to gossip. When one gives ear to sister Hearsay's windy breeze shooting sessions both the hearer and the teller are guilty of wrongdoing. Wherein is the greatest iniquity: Tonguing the wicked clackery or straining one's eardrums to the beat of the

melody? The apostle says, "neither be a partaker in another's sins." Does not this passage convey that we can become a participant in another's naughtiness? It does. Then let us not only bite our tongues and shut our mouths but likewise plug our ears when it comes to such scandalous gab.

Fourth, let all resolve to discourage gossip in the lives of others. This is really a step further than just not listening to it. Rather, this is a deliberate effort to bring the gossipy rubbish to the talker's attention. What? You say this is much too bold and may cause a demise in your popularity not to mention the chance of losing an ungodly friend or two. Well, what of it? Are you determined to let sin go unnoticed and unopposed in the lives of those you allegedly count as the dearest of family and friends? Bah. Away with old man Excuse! Why not rather be

good and urge them to more perfectly obey the will of the Father as we all should desire? If one does become irate at your sincere effort and alofts their presence from you what more have you lost than a companion that is a corrupter of good morals?

Fifth, know that gossip is a tool of destruction straight from the devil. Even high-class blab among the pseudo-pious can rip up a church, shatter a marriage, ruin a friendship, or lay waste another's influence. What more could the devil desire? Every time a brother or sister wiggles their tongue to the tune of gossipy chatter they are dancing hand in hand with Satan himself. Gossip is a two-stepper with the devil in a ballroom of wickedness. God says so.

Sixth, know that gossip is an irretrievable mass of spoken words whose damage is blown to and fro by windy whisperers.

The story is told of a young man who spread rumors about an elderly man in a community. The gossip created a scandal, causing the elderly gentleman untold embarrassment. The young man later apologized and asked the elder what he could do to correct the wrong. The man took a feather pillow, ripped it open, and let the feathers blow in flurries to the four winds. Thousands of feathers were scattered throughout the little village where they lived. The man then instructed the boy to retrieve the feathers and place them back in the pillow. "But that's impossible" said the young man. "Exactly," the old man replied, "and so it is once gossip passes from unguarded lips." The lesson was learned. May we too, brethren, learn the lesson well.

## Do You Fear The Lord?

Continued From Page 3

God's wishes (Genesis 6:22).

The Proverbs reveal that fear of the Lord must involve several things. **IF I WOULD TRULY FEAR THE LORD I MUST:**

(1) Seek Wisdom and Knowledge (Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-5; 9:10). The humanist doesn't seek Divine wisdom and knowledge because he

has no respect for God. He doesn't even believe in God! He considers the wisdom of man to be supreme and sufficient to handle all of life's problems. Contrariwise, the man who fears Jehovah realizes that he needs the wisdom from above to live a well-balanced and fulfilling life. His respect for God leads him to turn to God for

wisdom just as our respect for certain individuals leads us to ask them for advice and wisdom.

(2) Hate Evil and Depart From It (Proverbs 3:7; 8:13; 23:17). If we respect God we will believe that he knows what is best for us. Thus, if God has classified certain activities as evil, we will consider them evil also. Fear

of Jehovah is essential in overcoming temptations of this life. We cannot say that we fear the Lord while openly rebelling against him and participating in evil (Jonah 1:9, 10; I John 2:3-5). Doing that which God hates is not fear!

The man who fears God in the aforementioned manner will be blessed (Proverbs

10:27; 14:26, 27; 19:23; 22:4; 29:25). On the other hand, the man who does not fear the Lord has much to fear (Proverbs 1:29-32; 10:24). "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble" (15:16).

October 14, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Willard Collins Speaks Out  
On Jubilee, Rubel Shelly
- Evangelism!
- The Sin Of Worldliness
- Does God Require Works?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Are You Prepared  
For Death?

Volume 30 Number 42  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words C Truth

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

## Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 1)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

This will be a five-part study relative to the noble nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who was/is He? Many no doubt will think it a bit strange that inquiry is even made relative to his precise identity. They will say, "Does not everyone know who Jesus Christ was/is?" That they (the people in general) did not know His identity when He was here in His personal ministry is set forth in three crystal clear passages of Scripture. In Matthew 16:13 the Christ asked of His disciples what the masses of men in Palestine were saying about His identity. They responded by saying, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:14).

Those who thought He was John the Baptist were sadly mistaken; He was not John the Baptist. Those who thought He was Elijah were in error; He was not Elijah, the colorful prophet who lived as a contemporary with

Ahab and Jezebel in the Northern Kingdom. Those who mistook Him for Jeremiah, the weeping prophet of apostate Judah some six centuries earlier, were also in error: He was not Jeremiah returned to earth. Jeremiah wrote about the coming Messiah and His new covenant but never intimated that it would be he who would return when the fullness of time dawned (Jeremiah 23:5, 6; 31:31-34; Galatians 4:4). Those less sure and who simply confessed Him to be a nameless, returned prophet of God to earth were just as much in error in their unsure state of His identity. When the Galilean Prophet asked what the apostles thought of Him, Peter acted as official spokesman and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). With this answer, the good confession as later Scripture would call it -- I Timothy 6:12 -- ASV, Jesus was pre-eminently pleased. However, He was displeased with those who thought He was John,

Jeremiah, Elijah or an unnamed prophet of the past. He pronounced NO benediction or blessing upon those who knew not His precise identity. Who He was/is becomes intensely important!

The second Scripture is Matthew 22:41-45 wherein we read,

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son?

To declare Jesus Christ as David's Son was not comprehensive enough. That only explained His humanity: it was insufficient relative to His Deity. The ONLY way that Jesus could have been both David's Son and David's Lord is to be found in the fundamental fact that He was both human and divine. This

His enemies adamantly refused to concede. To them such was not open for consideration at all! They really did not know the correct answer to the query Jesus raised on that busy Tuesday of the Final Week -- "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" No Jew on earth today can answer that question any better than did they unless he acknowledges Jesus as both divine and human which few of them willingly do. The same is true with infidelic Gentiles. Jews do not have an unenviable monopoly in this momentous matter!

The third crystal clear Scripture is John 12:32-34 wherein we read,

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him. We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

This is another

conversation that occurred on Tuesday of the Final Week, a very busy, busy day for our Marvelous Master. They ignorantly failed to take into consideration that the Old Testament did indeed predict His resurrection and by such would enable His abiding forever even though he would be put to death by being lifted up -- the crucifixion. Bible students need to take ALL the Bible says on a given topic -- not just a part of it. This was their mistake and a commonly committed one in our day. This calls for a logical handling of the Bible -- the very thing a new breed of liberals among us detest and make mockery toward. How inexpressibly sad for many of them once knew better but have now left the safe hermeneutical ground they once occupied with courage and conviction. The WHY of such a departure is baffling!

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

## The Challenge Of Modern Music # 1

**David W. Hester**

When Kurt Cobain -- the lead singer for the Seattle-based alternative rock group Nirvana -- committed suicide last April, the music industry (as well as the mainstream media) proclaimed him as the "spokesman" for his generation. He was almost

deified by some; however, Time magazine reported how Cobain was abusing drugs while claiming to have overcome his addiction shortly before killing himself. Indeed, earlier in the year he had unsuccessfully tried to overdose in Rome.

It is symptomatic of our

times that such a misguided musician such as Cobain should be held up as a role model for young people. Of course, Cobain did not want to be a role model, and in fact resented it. However, with great fame also comes great responsibility. This is a lesson too many musicians have not

learned.

Young people are exposed to music constantly. They buy CDs in droves, pumping money into the music industry. Many adults turn to country music, since they can understand the lyrics and like the style. Many people are turning away from pop, rock,

country, and rap to the so-called "Christian" music. This is an attempt to fuse the styles of rock, rap, and country with religious lyrics.

What should be our response to all of this? How should parents deal with the  
Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Willard Collins Speaks Out On Jubilee, Rubel Shelly

Guest Editorial:

Holger Neubauer preaches for the good church in Forest Park Georgia. I consider him one of the finest young preachers in the brotherhood today. The following article is from his bulletin, The Forest Park Newsletter, and from his pen, and is dated October 3, 1994.

This is an important article, and needs to enjoy wide distribution. I urge you to read and ponder its contents.

This article is used by permission of the author.

On Monday, September 26, 1994, brother Willard Collins, preacher, educator, writer and one time president of David Lipscomb University, took a strong stand against the teachings of brother Rubel Shelly and the liberal "Jubilee" program of Nashville, Tennessee. Brother Collins spoke to a crowd of more than 300, which was comprised of mostly members of the church scattered throughout the southside of Atlanta. Monday night was Forrest Park's turn to host the cooperative meeting and we were delighted to have brother Collins with us.

Brother Collins preached the gospel in its truth and simplicity as he spoke about "What is the Church of Christ." His preaching style was reminiscent of the old time book, chapter, verse preaching that used to characterize our brotherhood. Though now 79 years young, brother Collins preached with great vigor and conviction about the true identifying characteristics of the church. Toward the end of his lesson, brother Collins

spoke specifically about the religious division and man-made doctrines which were sinful. At that juncture, brother Collins spoke in deep concern about the change agents in the church and particularly about Jubilee and Rubel Shelly. The following is a quote with brother Collins' permission for publication, from that very sermon.

*"I had to make a big choice, this of June, July, Oh we have a situation in Nashville that's hurting us, hurting us in regard to preaching the Word. We're polarized around Nashville. I've known Rubel Shelly so long. I always knew him as one of the most powerful preachers of the word. I worked with him at Getwell and Dunn in Memphis. I've been in the home of his mother . . . Franklin Camp told me when Rubel moved to Nashville, "if you can get him to teach at David Lipscomb, it will help." Years ago I hired him. I had Tom Holland, William Woodson, Rubel, other great men on the faculty; we hired these three. It didn't work out. I could cry, literally, I've prayed, I've shed tears. Jubilee has become an influential organ; it has become an influential thing in Nashville, that is telling that the Church of Christ as we know it was born in the Restoration, in the 19th century, not on Pentecost in A.D. 30. Before Jubilee this year, the congregation where Rubel preaches, joined with six protestant churches to have a post-Easter service... everything accepted, bands, choruses, instruments; everything accepted. Nobody said much against it, far as I know nothing against it. Rubel preached on the Resurrection. Wineskins, the magazine, has in its*

*forward that, the Church of Christ was born in the Restoration. I couldn't participate this year. I've been preaching 59 years. The church began on Pentecost in A.D. 30. I've been preaching 59 years that the church that we're trying to restore is not a denomination, that it is not the Catholic church; that we're seeking to restore the original church, which goes through the restoration, all the way back to Jerusalem and Pentecost, that is the church of Christ. . .*

*I have several friends who are going in this movement, I regret it, I'm trying to do all that I can to help them. I'm trying to do all that I can to bring them back to the Lord and the church, and all of us need to. We want to be united, and the only way that I know to unite, the only common denominator, is to leave creeds and come back to the Bible. Don't leave the Bible and go to creeds, of all things. . .*

*I had to make my decision, I'm not going to go."*

Although Brother Collins had appeared on the Jubilee in past years, he made a break because he was convinced he could not participate in the program scripturally any longer. We would that others would take heed to brother Collins message, who with great love in his heart, plead for the Jubilee program to turn back to the Bible.

May the influence of this good man be spread far and wide, and may those who left the paths of righteousness return to the old paths wherein is the good way.

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## Evangelism!

M. Floyd Bailey, Jr. neighbors, much less engage in widespread evangelism.

Often evangelism is an area of ministry of which we are unsure. The practical-minded want to maximize the outcome of every evangelistic effort. This in and of itself is not a bad attitude, but spiritually speaking, it is the wrong focus. Jesus told His disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . ." (Matthew 28:19). The command is simply "go . . . teach . . . baptize." We understand that the method of accomplishing this is an expedient, that is, the method employed should be that which helps us most quickly.

Sadly, many are not concerned with expediting evangelistic efforts, but would rather ruminate about the possibilities. Brethren, do we not sense the urgency?! Do we not realize the number of those who are lost? I suggest that many have not taken the time to talk to their

Again, we justify our waiting by claiming that we are "looking for just the right moment." Should we not be creating the right moment? Some would add to Jesus' word, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . . . when the opportunity arises."

Notice four points regarding evangelism:

1. Sow the seed, regardless of where it lands (Luke 8:5-15).

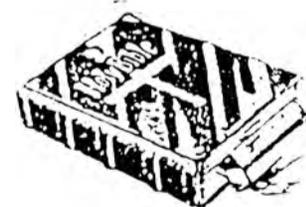
2. The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few (Matthew 9:37-38). Are you a laborer?

3. Let us plant and water, and let God determine the increase (I Corinthians 3:6-7).

4. "Go ye" means "go me" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

Let us all strive to spread the "Good News" of Jesus to all with whom we come in contact. Let us all be evangelists!

--Salem, VA.



## The Words Of Truth

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# The Sin Of Worldliness

**W. A. Holley**

The word worldliness refers to those of this world who are devoted to the pursuits of worldly pleasures (as hedonism which teaches that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life), as opposed to the teaching of religion or spiritual affairs as taught in your Bible (Titus 2:11-12; I John 2:15-17).

When the Bible teaches that we should not "love the world," the meaning is not that we should not love the planet earth with all its beautiful oceans, streams, beaches, sunrises, sunsets, and the like. Rather it is our responsibility to protect our environment as much as possible.

The sin of worldliness can destroy our nation and world. Ancient history reveals the fact that many great and powerful nations passed into oblivion because they refused to follow the way of God Almighty (Romans 1:18-32; Acts 14:15; 18; 17:22-31). The Assyrian, the Babylonian, and Roman empires are excellent examples of what happens to nations when God is not permitted to rule in the world which He created (Genesis 1:1-2; Isaiah 44:24; Jeremiah 10:12; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 10:6). God still rules in the kingdoms of men whether we wish to recognize it or not (Daniel 4:17, 25, 32; 2:21; 5:21). Humanism, like Communism, is doomed to

absolute and utter failure because God who created the world and man has been left out. Man cannot direct himself (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; John 14:1-6).

We shall discuss various and sundry sin-problems which should catch our readers' attention.

(1) Fornication and adultery have become very popular. Hundreds of both men and women are telling their experiences to nation-wide audiences. One famous ball player claims to have been involved with 20,000 women. Another says he was involved with 1,000 women. The sin of fornication and adultery are sins against God (Genesis 39:9; Proverbs 6:29, 32). One can become so callused till sexual sins become a way of life (Proverbs 30:20).

Elizabeth Taylor says she believes in marriage. Well she should since she has been married eight times. In many churches divorces have become quiet common, so much so, till little attention is given to it anymore. Elders, preachers, and other church-leaders tend to sweep it under the rug. But we can be certain that God will not forget our sins at the Great Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). More and more of our members are drinking and divorcing and remarrying. Here is one way the world gets into the church (See Ephesians 5:25-30; James 1:26-27). We are strong and weak at the same time depending on how we

solve our problems.

(2) Pornography represents one of our greatest evils. Magazines and video cassettes are regularly brought into the home where husbands and wives and children are exposed to the world's kind of vulgarity. These items are sold almost everywhere. What is pornography? It is "the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). It is no wonder that young boys and girls become active in sexual activities so early. In many instances their parents have taught them to so engage. What a shame!

How can one have a clean, pure, holy mind if he continues to fill it with garbage and trash and filth?

(3) Our members are watching too much television. Many miss the assembly in order to watch their favorite program. Which comes first television or the Lord's Day assembly? (Matthew 6:33; Psalm 37:25).

Television could have been a great force for good, but, alas, it has become an all-consuming power for evil. For example, television promotes violence. You don't think so? Listen to this: "Before television was belately introduced, they monitored rates of inappropriate physical aggression among 45 first and second-graders. After two

years of television, the rate increased 160 percent, in both boys and girls . . . " (Birmingham Post-Herald, April 9, 1993). A study of the effect that television has on violence shows that from 1945 to 1974 the white homicide in the United States increased 93 percent; in Canada, 92 percent. Learn a lesson: A 14-month-old child can adopt behavior it has seen on television, because it cannot distinguish fact from fiction. It thinks television tells him how the world really works. If someone gets in your way cut him down or blow him away. Parents, do not permit television to become your permanent baby-sitter.

(4) Worldliness is shown in the popularity of various sins. More and more teenagers say yes, to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. As a result violent crime is up 560 percent; illegitimate births up 419 percent; divorce up 400 percent; and teenage suicides have doubled.

Parents, it is past time for you to perform your duty to your children. Children need good, godly examples on the part of their mothers and fathers (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:17-21; Proverbs 22:6; II Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Parents, go to worship with them, sing and pray with them; You will never be sorry. Parents, do you have no feeling of responsibility toward your own children? Training children must begin

when they are young. An old oak tree cannot be successfully trained. Parents, your child needs academic, moral, and spiritual training. All bad habits must be given up; it is better to lose the anchor than the whole ship.

(5) To overcome worldliness set the finest example before your friends, your children, your business associates. Honesty is a virtue needed by all, but being strictly honest is a constant battle. Integrity is not a percentage proposition - either you have it or you don't.

Put your faith and trust in God Almighty. God is or God is not. The Bible is true or it is not. God created the heavens and the earth or He did not. The church described in the Holy Scripture is the true church or it is not. The plan of salvation presented in the New Testament is God's Plan or it is not. God has a divine pattern for worship or He does not. Truth is truth or it is not.

God requires responsible people everywhere to believe and obey His gospel or He does not (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Hebrews 5:8-9; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:6-10). We sincerely urge all our readers to help us make the world in which we live a better place for all men everywhere.

--P.O. Box 274, Parrish, AL 35580-0274.

## Does God Require Works?

**Allen Webster**

There is no way to earn our salvation by works of merit separate from God's wonderful grace. Paul said, "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). No man has a right to go about to earn his salvation and then boast that he has done so. The New Testament teaches that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). There are many who take this to mean that man can be saved by *grace alone before and without any works of obedience*. Is this a fair handling of the Word of God?

Faith is demonstrated by good works. James said, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? . . . Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (2:14, 17, 18). Faith without works is dead (2:20). Paul said we are saved by faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6). The rich, young ruler came to Jesus with the question, "What good thing shall I do, that

I may have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16). Jesus did not tell him that he did not have to do anything. He told him to "keep the commandments." The Lord said on another occasion, "If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15).

Have you submitted to God? Why not let your faith lead to repentance, confession, baptism, and faithful, dedicated Christian living (Romans 10:10; I Peter 3:21; Titus 2:12; I Corinthians 15:58). You cannot be saved by grace alone.

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**We live in a society that spends a lot of time getting things mixed up.**

**We spend millions to shield our eyes from junkyards along the highways and then hang pornography at eye level on newsstands for all to read.**

**We lock up juries and free criminals.**

**Married people are living apart and singles are living together.**

**We want to ban saccharin and legalize marijuana.**

**We advertise cigarettes in magazines with little notes at the bottom which maintain that this product can and will kill you. We ask them to please buy them, and then tell them that it's suicide.**

**In this sometimes crazed world, do you ever long for something that is always sane, and always unchanging? Well here's something on which you can depend: "It's in Hebrews 13:8 -- "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."**

**Why not study God's unchanging word? The best place to turn to understand people is to their creator.**

# The Challenge Of Modern Music # 1

Continued From Page 1  
music and groups their children support? Is country music the "safe" alternative many people claim it to be?

This series of articles will attempt to help deal with these and many more questions. Each style of modern music will be examined, with specific quotes from artists and songs. The public lives of some of the musicians will be examined to see whether they conform to basic Bible standards of morality. The songs will be compared to Bible teaching. At the end, some suggestions will be offered to both parents and children which are biblically based.

First, may I stress that I enjoy all types of music. From country to rock to classical, there are songs I like. I also enjoy playing good music. (I play the bass guitar for enjoyment). I was reared in a musically-oriented

family, and "cut my teeth" on country and bluegrass. The point is, these articles are not coming from someone who has no clue as to what is going on musically; neither is it coming from a person who is biased against one kind of music. You see, the problem is not the style of music. It has to do with what the music is saying, as well as what the musicians are promoting.

To lay the foundation for such a study as this, there must be some things for both parents and children to consider. First, **Just because my child's music is different from mine doesn't automatically make it wrong.** That is to say, there is a big difference between Perry Como, Little Richard, the Beatles, Fleetwood Mac, and Boys II Men. Again, the problem is not with the style of music. It's what the music is saying.

Second, **Just because my parents, preacher, etc.**

**oppose the lyrics to my favorite songs and public lifestyles of my favorite groups doesn't make those songs and groups right.** This means that the claims of some performers are completely off-base. Some will point to opposition from religious leaders and parents as "proof" that what they are doing and singing is right. Some young people will do what they want in spite of what adults say. Could it be that Mom and Dad know a little more than their kids give them credit for knowing?

Third, **I cannot present today's country music to my child as a clean and wholesome alternative without recognizing and acknowledging the faults in it.** This may be a shock to some, but there are immoral performers and ungodly songs in country music! Given, it's not as widespread as in some other forms, but

one would be blind to deny the obvious! In the next article, country music will be examined in detail.

Fourth, **I cannot defend rock, rap, and pop "down the line" without recognizing, acknowledging, and condemning those songs that are sinful and those groups which publically uphold an immoral lifestyle.** Young people must wake up and smell the coffee on this one! Far too many dismiss immoral lyrics with, "I just enjoy the music; I don't listen to the words," but when a song they like is played, they invariably will sing along with it, word-for-word. Also, they must think about what their money is going to support.

Fifth, and most important, **I must compare the music I enjoy and the groups I like to the principles set forth in the Bible.** As with any question of life, this is what

the child of God must do.

When comparing anything with the Bible, four basic points must be considered. First, **Does the Bible approve it or condemn it?** Second, **Is there a biblical principle related to it?** Third, **Will it affect my Christian influence for good or bad?** Fourth, **What do my parents, elders, preacher, etc. say about it?** If we are going to be a "people by the book," we must do these things and uphold those practices which are in keeping with God's Word.

If I listen to rock/pop/rap, I must realize I must be selective. If I listen to country, I must admit it isn't all "squeaky clean." It shall be our objective in this series to shed the light of truth on modern music, and to try to help both parents and young people.

## Are You Prepared For Death?

**Elwood Holt**

Before a big battle, a Christian soldier said to his comrade, "You are detailed to go to the front, while I am to remain with the baggage. Let us change places. I'll go to the front; you remain in camp." "What for? -- asked his companion. "Because I am prepared to die and you are not." The exchange was made.

I am wondering today how many of us would be willing to risk our lives for our friends? How many understand the value of one human soul? David said after the death of Absalom, his son, "Oh Absalom, my son Absalom, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee." He would gladly have given his life for his son because he knew that he had died in rebellion, and unsaved. It is sad to see souls going into the presence of Almighty God every minute of the day, unprepared to stand before the wrath of the

Great Judge. It is still sadder to see members of our own families going into the great expanse of eternity, inadequately equipped for that life. It makes us want to do something for them, but we can't. After they are gone we cannot call them back. Nor can we obey the gospel for them. There is no such thing as "baptism for the dead." In I Corinthians 15 when Paul mentioned "baptism for the dead" he was showing the power of the resurrection and telling us how to get ready for it. He says that baptism prepares us for the dead, and, if the dead rise not, why be baptized at all? It is a very beautiful argument in favor of what God commands the alien sinner to do, but it has been perverted, like other passages, and men have sought to justify a baptism for people who went on out of this life unprepared.

It would be wonderful if we would properly evaluate life -

- if we would stamp timely things with their true value. Too many of us are too busy doing this or that, seeking this fortune and that, until we have no time for the winning of our friends and loved ones to the cause of Christ. But, what can such ill-gotten gains profit us in the last days? The wise man said, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath" (Proverbs 11:4). Riches cannot buy salvation. Many parents have gained vast fortunes but lost the souls of their children. When we have a deep passion for human souls such as our Saviour had for us, we will drop everything else in favor of helping someone else see the marvelous light as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Man is unhappy until he embraces truth. Men grope through life seeking contentment. They gain their power, their riches, their prominent places of prestige, their homage, but their hearts are as troubled and turbulent as ever. You

could give a man half the universe, and he would quarrel with the holder of the other half. He thinks that he needs all the universe to himself. But, that would not do either. He would still be an unhappy creature. David comprehended it better when he said, "My soul panteth for God, for the living God." There is that in man which the knowledge of the living God only can satisfy, which having God, has all things in him. God has given man two eyes, two ears. If he loses one he has another on which to depend. But, the Father has given man only one soul. If he loses it, he is lost forever. Is our soul slipping away? Will it one day be out of reach of the gospel, the power of God unto salvation? Are we, by carelessness, indifference, too much business, and other frivolous excuses, losing the souls of our children? Like parents -- like child. Faithful parents -- faithful children. Saved

parents -- saved children. Lost parents -- lost children. "Would to God I had died for thee!" May these terrible and tragic words never escape our tormented hearts. We can do something about our souls now. We may not be able to tomorrow. We can dedicate our children, our friends, our loved ones to the Lord now. They may be beyond our reach tomorrow.

The soldier who switched places with his comrade did so because he realized the tragedy of a lost soul. Do we? I wonder if we do. Jesus loved us so much that he laid down his life for us. "Greater love hath no man" than this, he declared. Seldom will one die even for a friend. Jesus died for us while we were his enemies. Surely out of hearts of gratitude we want to so live as to please him. Jesus said, I will come back for you (John 14:1-5). Are you ready to go?

October 21, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Baptism: A Different Command
- Laying Aside Weights
  - Salvation
- The Challenge Of Modern Music #2
- "Those Days Are Long Gone"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Laying Aside Weights

Volume 30 Number 43  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words ( Truth

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

## Fifteen Miles From Heaven

**Earl Kimbrough**

Moses E. Lard, the well-known Gospel preacher of the nineteenth century, kept a preaching appointment at Richmond, Missouri, in 1853. As he was hitching his horse near the meeting house, a black man named Dick, a brother in Christ, approached him and introduced himself. He told Lard that he once belonged to the church at a place called Stanley's, where "old brother Warrinner" used to preach, but after Warrinner's death, the church ceased meeting, depriving Dick for a long time of the privilege of assembling with the saints. Yet, his faith in Christ had remained steadfast. "I have come fifteen miles today to hear you preach," he said, "and I have brought with me my young master, Thomas . . . I think he would be a Christian if he knew how."

After being introduced to Thomas, Lard went into the house to begin the services. He strongly believed in

divine providence and wondered to himself if God's hand were in the presence of Dick and his master. The audience was large, but not a Christian there had come fifteen miles, a considerable distance in that day. But here was a bondservant who after working hard all week, had traveled that far to attend the meeting.

Lard was still thinking about Dick's words as he entered the pulpit to begin his lesson. "Thomas was in the congregation -- a circumstance which I determined not to forget for the next hour and a half," he later recalled. And through his speech, he kept steadily in mind "a plain honest boy of sixteen." The simple sermon, deliberately delivered in the "plowman's phrase" that had been Lard's early dialect, accomplished its purpose. When the invitation was extended, Thomas went forward and gave the preacher his hand.

"Poor Dick was as near

Heaven then, as he will ever be again, till he reaches that blessed abode. He could not sit, he could not stand, he did not shout, but clapped his hands; while tears ran over those toil-worn cheeks. He meekly occupied a distant corner of the house; and I felt, if angels delight to gather around the heart that is full of gratitude to Christ, surely they must have a strong pleasure in folding their wings in that corner just then." Thomas was baptized into Christ that evening.

A little more than two weeks later, at the request of Dick and Thomas, Lard went to the community near their home to preach for two days in the shade of some large trees. There a modest stand and some crude seats had been erected to accommodate the services. Resolved to make the most of the limited time, the first day Lard preached two and a half hours to a large audience of "an honest, agricultural people, blessed with pertinent

common sense and sound hearts." The sermon made a favorable impression on most of those present. The next day the audience, undiminished in size, gathered again to hear another equally long sermon. At the close, four men came forward to confess Christ. Excitement was such that Lard thought it would be unwise to leave the people in their present mood in order to meet another appointment where nothing might be accomplished. So he decided to stay.

The third night eight more confessed their faith in Christ; and before the meeting closed, forty had been baptized for the remission of sins. Furthermore, those who remained of the old Stanley church came to take seats in the assembly of the saints. On the Lord's Day, the brethren, old and new, met at a convenient place a mile distant to organize a New Testament church. They invoked the protection of God

and resolved to be faithful in His service. "A table was then spread, and on it were placed the emblematic loaf and cup. The supper was then eaten in memory of the Master, a song sung, and the services of the hour closed" (Lard's Quarterly, September, 1863, pp. 23-25).

The church, known as South Point, was located in Ray County, Missouri. It came into existence primarily because a chattel slave who was also a bondservant of Christ loved both masters enough to travel fifteen miles to hear the Gospel. That journey may have been the difference between heaven and hell for Thomas, and for many others as well. God, in the exercise of His providence, very often uses what to us may seem to be an insignificant act of faith to accomplish His purpose. Heaven indeed may sometimes be just "fifteen miles away."

## Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 2)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

We now continue the discussion of a most interesting, intriguing query, "Who Is Jesus Christ?" It is a Biblically-based question as per Matthew 16:13, 14; 22:41-45 and John 12:32-34. He was misunderstood while here in the flesh during the first century; He is still

misunderstood by men en masse. Manufactured Messiahs abound in the minds of men and women. There is the Christ who has been created in the mind of modernism or religious theological liberalism. They deny any predictive prophecy of the Old Testament speaks of Him. They deny His virgin

birth, His being "God with us" and the mighty miracles He performed. They do not believe in His atoning death or His triumphant resurrection. They reject the entire scope of Bible Finals such as His second coming, His raising all the dead, the final judgment and the two eternal destinies of heaven

and hell. When finished they have Jesus robbed of His Deity and leave Him nothing but man.

There is the Christ created by some of our own liberalistic brethren. They think they can tamper with, transition, restructure or reconstruct His church and with His assumed approval.

They claim great allegiance to Him with their lips but at the same time teach salvation by grace only, and faith only, seek to change drastically the worship He authorized, undermine the pattern He authorized, ignore His gospel plan of salvation, stress that power is in the gospel records  
Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## Baptism: A Different Command

Glenn Colley

A preacher for what is arguably the most popular denomination in America recently wrote on the necessity of Baptism, "Shall we say that all the other acts of obedience to Christ are a result of salvation but only this one (baptism) is necessary to salvation? I think not . . ."

What he was trying to do was undergird the false premise that baptism falls along side of all the other commands which those, who are already Christians, faithfully follow. He believes that baptism is not for the remission of sins, but rather *because* of the remission of sins. Although Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . . (Mark 16:16)," he would say, "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized."

Is baptism different? Is baptism really a command

which must be obeyed to *become* a Christian, or is it like the many others which are done after becoming a Christian? The answer is seen with the clearness of crystal upon a simple reading of God's word.

Baptism is different from eating the Lord's supper, or singing in worship, or doing good unto all men. What other act of obedience is:

### 1. For the remission of sins?

--(Acts 2:38) -- "Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .'"

### 2. To put one into Christ?

--(Galatians 3:27) -- "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

### 3. To put one into the death of Christ?

--(Romans 6:3) -- "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."

### 4. To wash away sins?

--(Acts 22:16) -- "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

### 5. To save us?

--(I Peter 3:21) -- ". . . 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."

According to God's word, baptism is essential to your salvation.

## Laying Aside Weights

W. A. Holley

"Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (steadfastness) the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2, ASV).

We do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews, but, if we believe the Scriptures, we know that Paul did not write it (II Thessalonians 3:17).

The Book of Hebrews was written to forestal the Hebrew

Christians from giving up Christ and the church, and returning to the Old Testament Law.

The Hebrew writer seeks to encourage his Hebrew brethren to greater achievements of faith by calling their attention to a host of ancient heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11. These are the "great cloud of witnesses" by which they were "encompassed." The witnesses are represented as spectators looking down upon Christians as they run the race of faith. To win, the Christian must lay aside all hindrances, burdens, weights, which tend to prevent him/her from gaining victory. Here we suggest that I Corinthians 9:24-27, be read.

The athlete, in training, uses heavy weights, but when he is ready to enter the contest, he always lays aside all that which would encumber him. Paul is a fine example of what we now describe (I Corinthians 9:27). "The sin which doth so easily beset us" must be the sin of unbelief (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17; John 8:24; Mark 16:16).

### Things To Lay Aside

(1) The Hebrews Christians should have realized that the Old Testament had been abolished (Ephesians 2:13-22). The Old Covenant had been "nailed to the cross" (Colossians 2:14-17). When Continued On Page 4

## Salvation

Bobby Key

It was late at night in the Macedonian town of Philippi when a jailer asked Paul and Silas the greatest question one could ask another, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Until honest men cease to inhabit the earth, they will be stirred to cry aloud, "What must I do to be saved?" Many answers have been given in response to this all important question. No man should be satisfied with the answer unless it comes from God.

The question impresses our mind to accept the fact that there is a condition to salvation. Something must be done. We must learn the answer to the question. Life is too short, eternity too long, heaven too precious, and hell too awful to regard lightly the question of salvation.

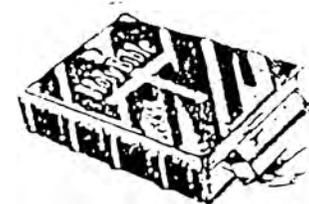
We must admit that we have sinned, and sin will cause us to be lost. There is a debt that we cannot pay; we must turn to him who is willing to pay the debt he does not own. There is only one with power to save. We "glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14)." Only through Calvary may the sins of wayward man be blotted out. Whatever the plan may be, it is worthless if it leaves out the cross and the blood shed on the cross.

Whatever God, by His Son, requires of us is sacred because its Author is sacred. Salvation is of God, its spokesman is Christ, and its price is the blood of

Jesus. Every sinner must open his heart to the wonderful story of God's love, and words of hope through Christ. It is not possible to come to God without first hearing what God has said. "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God: (Romans 10:17). When heaven speaks to us, we must believe. There is a God in heaven; Christ Jesus is the Son of God; this sinless One suffered and died that I can be saved. It is not possible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:1-6). Since we have sinned we must repent (Acts 2:38). We are then happy to confess that we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 10:9-17). At this point we follow the Lord's own instruction - to be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

The jailer of our text was told "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). Notice Paul spoke unto him the word of the Lord -- faith comes by hearing. The same hour of the night the jailer washed the stripes of the men who had been beaten -- this shows his sorrow and repentance. He then was baptized as the Lord had instructed. After his baptism, he fed the prisoners, he rejoiced, and the Holy Spirit informs us that he believed in God with all his house.

You now have the Lord's answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"



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# The Challenge Of Modern Music #2

David W. Hester

Country music is popular among many people. Being the one form of music that is uniquely American, it appeals to a broad audience. When parents see the debauchery in pop and rock music, they will often attempt to promote country as a "clean" alternative. But, is it?

When one examines today's country music, he immediately sees an aspect of it which glorifies sin, ungodly lifestyles, and demeans religion. Perhaps, it is not as prevalent as in "mainstream" popular music, but one would be blind to deny the obvious.

Garth Brooks is one of the hottest stars in country music. The 1994 CMA Entertainer of the Year has legions of fans, and is a successful "crossover" artist. But, Mr. Brooks is guilty of promoting things which are opposed to New Testament Christianity.

In the Oct. 22, 1992 issue of *Newsweek*, John Leland quotes Brooks as saying,

"traditional family values was encouraging children to be the best they can be. If your parents are . . . of the same sex, that's still family values to me." This is said to be Brooks' way of explaining his song, "We Shall Be Free," which also supports "same sex couples."

Mr. Brooks makes two other statements about homosexuality which are amazing. In the article, he says, "It's tough for me, because I love the Bible." If Brooks truly loved the Bible, he would reject homosexuality as a sin! He also says, "For those people that feel religiously that homosexuality is wrong, are they not as right as those who feel homosexuality is right?" We would answer, "NO!" What is right or wrong is determined by what the Bible teaches, not our feelings. Romans 1:21-27 clearly condemns homosexuality.

Hank Williams Jr. is another popular country artist who

has won the Entertainer of the Year award several times. However, Mr. Williams' penchant for drunkenness is well known. In fact, his songs, "All My Rowdy Friends Are Comin' Over Tonight," and, "Born To Boogie," glorify whiskey and drunkenness. When accepting his award in 1988, he said, ". . . it's a great feeling to drink a little whiskey now and then . . ." Many of his concerts are characterized by him performing while drunk, and doing obscene things on stage.

Billy Ray Cyrus is one of the hottest new stars in country music, on the basis of one song. "Achy Breaky Heart" was a monster hit for him, but if one saw Mr. Cyrus cavort on stage, he would think he was witnessing a burlesque show. It seems as though he has no modesty as to what he wears or how he behaves. But, the ironic thing about these men is that they will also invoke God's name

when it's convenient!

Aaron Tippin is another hot country artist. His newest hit is, "Honky-Tonk Superman." In it, Mr. Tippin describes his transformation from a mild-mannered, hardworking man into a foolhardy drunk on the weekends. The video for the song makes its meaning clear.

Which brings us to another point. If one takes thirty minutes out of his time to watch Country Music Television, he would see immodest clothing worn by both men and women, glorification of alcoholic beverages, and promotion of sin! In short, he would see the same sort of things as he would on MTV, just at a lesser pace!

Due to lack of space, we cannot examine such stars as Tanya Tucker, Marty Stuart, Travis Tritt, Lorrie Morgan, and others. Suffice it to say that they are also culpable in glorifying sin in their songs, statements, and public lifestyles. Anyone who

knows anything about these performers realizes this.

In spite of the things that are wrong in country music, there are still plenty of performers who aren't promoting sin and who are trying to project a clean lifestyle in their songs and image. In addition, there are some brethren who have made it big in country, and are apparently still faithful to God.

The discriminating listener must apply the same standards to country music that he uses for all other types of music. He must admit that there are ungodly performers and songs, and listen to those that aren't. As I said in the last article, I was reared on country/bluegrass. I've always enjoyed it, but I also realize as a child of God that I cannot give my support to those artists who promote ungodliness. May we all try to uphold Christ in all things.

## "Those Days Are Long Gone"

Cecil Corkren

Have you seen the very humorous TV commercial advertising Kentucky Fried Chicken? A group of elderly men and a young lad are discussing prices of meals in the past; when the lad points them to a sign advertising Kentucky Fried Chicken meals for less than one dollar. While they are eating, one man said, "I remember when you could get a meal for a buck fifty," and another said, "I remember when you could get a meal for one dollar," and the lad said, "Those Days Are Long Gone."

Some can remember when things were different among churches of Christ. No one has to tell us that things have changed in the past thirty years. From the mid-fifties and through the seventies the church was a vibrant force. Churches were being established by the hundreds each year, and the members were enthusiastic about converting the lost, and restoring the unfaithful. Filmstrips were shown by preachers

and elders and members, many times late at night baptizing those they had taught. New buildings were being built in many places. The churches of Christ were the fastest growing religious body in America. Two weeks for meetings and two weeks for Vacation Bible Schools were a common practice. In my forty-five years of preaching I have observed many changes. Preachers were housed in the homes of brethren. Meals were eaten from the tables of the good sisters. Hotels, motels, and restaurants were seldom used. "Those Days Are Long Gone."

Now we cut gospel meetings shorter and shorter. We cannot take long sermons, nor Bible-filled sermons. Many preachers spend more time trying to entertain the members, and the brethren go home empty.

We want comfort and convenience in our religion today. We are "At Ease In Zion" (Amos 6:1). I am reminded of the old commercial "You have come a long way baby." Yes, the days

are gone like those in the past. We now have building half full or less, and a skilled preacher in the pulpit paid a good salary, and the big churches have youth ministers to entertain our youth with very little Bible teaching. We need to stop and learn from the past. Sometimes hundreds were baptized in a single gospel meeting. In Clanton, Alabama, in a five weeks meeting 168 were baptized into Christ. My visit to Russia, two years ago, brought back memories. We had daily baptisms in our campaign in Dneipropetrovsk, Ukraine. And in all 40 obeyed the gospel. This is why many of the brethren like to go to Russia. When we are enthusiastic we will inspire the sinner to "be zealous and repent" (Revelation 3:19). Why should those days be "Long Gone?" We need to restore methods that work. We need to be inspired when we read Jeremiah 6:16.

Who's to blame? When we see each year the

congregations getting smaller, and smaller we ask what is wrong? From many of our Christian Colleges come the liberal thinkers with what they think are the answers. Many elders would not know the difference when error is taught. If the new ways are so good, why are we not doing what they were doing in years past?

Yes, we need a great religious awakening. We can do that only by preaching the gospel like we all were preaching it in

fifties, sixties, and the seventies. The preaching in those years was patterned after the early church in Acts of the apostles. "They went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Even though "Those Days Are Long Gone," we can bring them back in preaching the word like they did, and we again will become the fastest growing church in the world!

--1705 Sandra Lee Drive, Japsen, AL 35501.

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

What's the "tireddest" you've ever been? When do you remember in your life experiencing the greatest intensity of fatigue and exhaustion? Perhaps for some a picture of boot camp flashes to mind. Maybe for others it was athletic competition as a youth. Well, hold that thought for a moment. Put yourself back in that exhausted body again. I want you to better understand a passage in the Bible. It's Revelation 14:11, and it describes Hell. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night. . . " Hell can accurately be described as a place where you can't lay down. There is no rest there.

Now, look to the other side of the coin in the words of Jesus: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Can you see the contrast? Hell is eternal fatigue and unrest. Heaven is calm rest in the land that is fairer than day . . . (Revelation 14:13).

Now, anyone can go to hell . . . only faithful Christians CAN HAVE HEAVEN. Are you a faithful Christian prepared for heaven?

# Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 2)

Continued From Page 1  
with an attending de-emphasis on the epistles and Revelation, hobnob with denominations with adulation of their work and a constant bashing of the Lord's church before cheering denominational gatherings. Shelly, Cope, Morrison, Woodroff, Osborne, etc., are in the forefront of such. They have a different Christ than the one they used to preach!

There is the picture of Jesus by those who deny He is God and reduce Him to creature status, viz., the Jehovah's Witnesses. When they knock on your door as the so-called Witnesses of Jehovah God, you can just mark it down that they do not accept the Christ of the Bible. They have their own manufactured Messiah and He is not God Incarnate as the four gospel records present Him to be.

There is the Christ imagined by Roman Catholicism. Catholic theologians have Him so weak or impotent in

heaven that He has to have a Vicar on earth to represent His cause. They have Him so inaccessible in heaven that He can only be approached by Mother Mary or by the invocation of departed saints. They have invented their own Christ and He is not a forty-second cousin to the Biblical Christ.

Protestantism is not a whit better along this line as the various religious denominations have envisioned their own brand of a Messiah. They think He endorses everything that calls itself a church regardless of what they teach or fail to teach. They have Him the head of countless religious bodies. They have turned Him into a Messiah of Monstrosity -- one head over hundreds if not thousands of religious organizations called churches or cults. They do a complete Passover of Scriptures such as Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:5 and Colossians 1:18-24

which have Him head over ONE church or ONE religious body -- the one He came to earth to build and the one He successfully established on that memorable Pentecost in Acts 2. Protestants have manufactured Messiahs on an assembly-line production basis. One can just take his pick!

Cultism is not any better. They belittle Christ's Word, place a charismatic leader between Christ and their constituents and pay little or no attention to His teachings in the New Testament.

Some years back we were introduced to Jesus Christ Superstar -- a blasphemous movie from the word go. When finished they not only had robbed Him of His Deity but left Him a mere man and a very poor specimen of manhood at that! They attributed attitudes to Him, linked actions with Him and placed words in His mouth that have no Biblical basis at

all. They tampered with the portrait set forth of Him in the New Testament and tampered greatly and grievously.

Some twenty or twenty-five years ago we heard a great deal about the Jesus Movement. It was just a fad and has all but faded the religious scene. This movement had simply manufactured another Messiah and all but ignored the Biblical Messiah. A young man of that movement traveled across the southern part of the United States. He stopped to see a fine and faithful gospel preacher in northern Mississippi near where I am in a gospel meeting as these lines are typed. He identified himself as belonging to the Jesus Movement. Furthermore, he declared that he had thrown away his Bible (reminiscent of what growing numbers of our own preachers have now done) and was just traversing the country preaching Jesus.

This is worse than a carpenter who throws away all his building tools and goes forth to build houses, a doctor who throws away all his medical equipment and medicine and goes forth to heal, or a lawyer who throws away all legal briefs and court case decisions and goes forth to be an attorney. Minus a Bible what would one preach about the true, Scriptural Christ? It would be a perverted Christ and twisted gospel for a surety!

There are only two Christs possible for man to accept. One is fanciful and comes in all types of human concoctions; the other is factual and is the true, Biblical Christ. The former is traditional, imagined and concocted; the latter is real, genuine, Biblical, Scriptural.

Setting forth the true Christ will be the focus of part three in this five part study.

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

## Laying Aside Weights

Continued From Page 2  
When Jesus Christ became High Priest, "there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Hebrews 7:12-14; 9:15-17; II Corinthians 3:13-18). Those who reject the New Testament, but try to follow Old Testament commands, have their minds veiled and their hearts hardened even to this day.

Christians are not required to offer animal sacrifices, keep the sabbath day, observe the Jewish feast days, and the like.

(2) We should lay aside all acts of disobedience to God, all covetousness, anger, wrath, railing, shameful speaking, and the like (Colossians 3:5-11). It is possible for one to live in these sins.

(3) We should strip away

all uncleanness, foolish talking, fornication, adultery, and all other works of the flesh (Ephesians 5:3-14; Galatians 5:19-21).

(4) Let us take a stand against all "rioting and drunkenness . . . chambering and wantonness . . . strife and envying" (Romans 13:13-14). Here we have three couplets of vices. These show the progression of sin which leads the sinner onward till his conscience becomes so seared he will justify almost anything (Proverbs 30:20; James 1:13-15; Romans 6:23).

(5) "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, long for

the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Peter 2:1-2, ASV).

(6) Christians should lay aside all excuses, all worry and anxiety, and then put their faith and trust in Him who cares for us all (Luke 12:22-34; Matthew 6:25-34; I Peter 5:7).

(7) We should lay aside all long-felt grief and unassuaged sorrow, as much as is possible. Life must go on; it is unfruitful to try to live in the past. There are some things which we must not allow to dominate our minds. David the King is a wonderful example for us. When his son died, he changed his perspective, and tried to return to his normal way of living (II

Samuel 12:23).

Why dwell upon words which cannot be recalled? (Psalm 64:1-10). Why should we punish ourselves acts which cannot be undone? If you are a Christian, repent of your transgression, confess it to God and to others who may be involved, and then trust God to do what He has promised (Hebrews 8:10-13; I John 1:6-10; 2:1-5). Why should we torment ourselves with the sad refrain of "What Might Have Been?"

If past mistakes can be undone, then, by all means, let us do so; but if we cannot, it is time for us to readjust our thinking processes. In to the most sheltered life, storms and disappointments, sickness and death, are destined to

come; but instead of permitting such to wreck our lives, we can use them as stepping stones toward success (I Peter 1:4-7; Romans 8:28). We should remember, that the same flame that melts the wax will also harden the clay.

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

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October 28, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- New Book: Change Agents In The Churches Of Christ
- The Problem Of Pleasure
- Where Two Or Three Are Gathered Together?
- Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 3)
- The Challenge Of Modern Music #3
- "Most Of A Minute"

Volume 30 Number 44  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words ( Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak words of truth and soberness." -- Acts

## Shining Forth As Lights In \_\_\_\_\_

**B. J. Clarke**

In the midst of this crooked and perverse nation, the sons of God must shine forth as lights in the world (Phillipians 2:15). We must let our lights so shine before men in order that they may see our good works and glorify the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Satan, the god of this world, has blinded the minds of unbelievers lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them (II Corinthians 4:4). But God has commanded the light to shine out of darkness and has shined in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6). Though we were once darkness, we are now light in the Lord and thus must conduct ourselves as children of light (Ephesians 5:8). As children of light we must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, for light and darkness can have no communion together (Ephesians 5:11; II Corinthians 6:14). We have been translated out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and as a result, the Father has made us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Colossians 1:12, 13).

There are several ways in which we can let our lights shine forth in this dark world of sin. Perhaps there is no more powerful way to shine

our lights than to demonstrate the quality of love. The critical importance of love is clearly seen in a conversation Jesus had with a certain lawyer who, in an effort to test Jesus, asked the Lord what the greatest commandment was in the law. 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 greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).* With this text before us, let us notice how we can shine forth as lights in love.

### SHINING FORTH AS LIGHTS IN OUR LOVE FOR GOD

It is interesting that in specifying the greatest commandment, Jesus did not cite one of the ten commandments as being the greatest. Instead, he quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. We are behooved to ask the following question: Why did Jesus point to Deuteronomy 6:5 as being the first and greatest commandment? It is because he knew that if one dedicated himself to love God with all of his heart, soul, strength and mind, that obedience to all other divine commandments would surely

follow. Jesus stressed the connection between love and obedience when he said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The apostle of love later penned similar words when he wrote, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. . . . And this is love, that we walk after his commandments" (I John 5:3; II John 6).

The Pharisees emphasized obedience without giving consideration as to whether this obedience was motivated by a heart given over to God in love.

They were more concerned with external actions than they were with the inner attitude of the heart. The reaction of the scribe to Jesus' response demonstrates that he correctly perceived that Jesus was stressing more than mere performance of obedience. Mark's account of the incident records that the scribe said unto Jesus, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:32, 33).

The latter portion of the scribe's reply is reminiscent

of Psalm 40:6-8, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." This passage appears puzzling at first because it seems to deny that God ever required his people to bring sacrifices and offerings to him. Even a casual reading of the books of Exodus and Leviticus shows that God did indeed desire and require offerings and sacrifices. Does Psalm 40 contradict Exodus and Leviticus? The solution to this apparent problem is to recognize the use of the hermeneutical device known as an ellipsis. An ellipsis is the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied. Keeping this in mind, the passage could read, "Thou didst not desire sacrifice and offering alone." In other words, God never desired or required that his people merely go through the motions of bringing their offerings to him. Two key words in the passage are the words "delight" and "heart." God wanted more than mere offerings and sacrifices. He wanted those who brought these offerings and sacrifices to do so with delight and love in their hearts.

Two passages from the prophets serve as perfect illustrations of God's demand for more than just the mere act of performance in obeying him. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of the goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me. . . . (Isaiah 1:10ff). To this Micah adds, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offering, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 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?" (Micah 6:6-8). Our God desires that we worship him with hearts full of love. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for drawing nigh unto him with their mouth and honoring him

Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## New Book: Change Agents In The Churches Of Christ

While there are many good books being written for education and edification, as a rule I don't advertise or single one out for recommendation. However, today I am going to make an exception.

The last decade has seen a swelling in the ranks of those preachers, youth directors and others who seek to change the church of our Lord into another denomination. Their agenda has been gradually revealed to the rest of us through their lectures and books and magazines like Wineskins and Image. Their movement with its error and destruction has successfully split many churches in the brotherhood. Church division should grieve every Christian in the world.

The new book is entitled, "CHANGE AGENTS IN THE CHURCHES OF

CHRIST." and the author is William Woodson from Nashville, Tennessee.

Brother Woodson is a master at sifting through mountains of information and revealing the key pillar issues. In this book he logically outlines his points of discussion to shed the clearest light on these doctrines of men. For those who have somewhat "kept up" with the change movement, this book will be encouraging and empowering by its strong arguments and revealing quotations. For others who may have wondered what this change concern was all about, and why we all should be alarmed and alert, this book will be stirringly informative. Brother Woodson, as an educator and scholar, is very aware of the importance of being fair. All quotations, whether

from the printed page or from recorded speech, are carefully footnoted.

In my opinion, every church should furnish her elders and preacher(s) with a copy of this important book. If our church leaders are uninformed about the dangers lurking about, how can they effectively guard the flock from those dangers? This book will be a great tool.

I am not involved in the publishing of this book in any way. My interest and recommendation is based solely on my concern for the church of Christ. To order this book, you may call Sain Publications at 615-363-6905, or write Sain Publications 217 E. Jefferson St. Pulaski, TN 38478

The book in hardback is \$14.00, in paperback it is \$6.95. Include \$2.00 for shipping and handling.

## Where Two Or Three Are Gathered Together?

Holger Neubauer

A general rule of Bible interpretation is that "any scripture taken out of its rightful context becomes nothing more than a mere pretext." More simply, any scripture is to be understood in its complete thought, lest the scripture becomes used for something it was never intended. Such has been the case with Jesus' statement in Matthew 18:20, when our Lord said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This verse

has been cited thousands of times by Christians when referring to a worship service. Now it is certainly true that God is with us while we worship but this verse is placed in the context of settling problems in the church.

First, it must be recognized that God is always with faithful Christians, whether they are worshipping or not. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 18:20). The Hebrew writer contended for the same

affirming the words of the Lord, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). God is always with His obedient children and if he forsakes us it will be because we have chosen to depart from God (Hebrews 12:15).

Second, the immediate context of Matthew 18:20 concerns the employment of disciplinary steps when a brother has been found sinning against another brother. Immediately before these words Jesus said,

*Moreover, if thy brother*  
Continued On Page 4

## The Problem Of Pleasure

Johnny Ramsey

Of all the problems we face today -- from atheism to legalism -- nothing poses a more formidable foe than the pursuit of hedonism. That which panders to the flesh and seeks sensual gratification rather than spiritual contentment is the order of the day for many in our world of five billion people. In Galatians, chapter six, we are reminded that those who sow to the flesh shall reap corruption. Many social diseases derive from profligate behavior patterns that war against the soul (I Peter 2:11). The massive carnality of our world reflects in the misery that always follows self-centered pleasure that lasts but for a fleeting moment (Hebrews 11:25). So many people today, like Esau, barter spiritual blessings for transient satisfaction and wind up slopping pigs as did the prodigal of Luke 15! We should always remember:

Joy is not in what we own...

Joy comes from what we are!

The philosophy of doing whatever makes us feel good

is of momentary, materialistic benefit and does not give consideration to the whole of life nor does it contemplate later life or final judgment. Solomon gave a classic rejoinder to those enamored with mundane glory in Ecclesiastes, chapters two and twelve. He had the ability to acquire whatever he so desired but at the end of life he admitted that all had been in vain. In fact, such emphasis was "a striving after the wind." Solomon then advised us to seek God's will ardently in our youth and never regret missing out on worldly fame and glory. In fact, his summary of what we should emphasize is clear and succinct:

Fear God And

Keep His Commandments!

The problem of pleasure is a consuming fire in our bones. Incessantly we grasp for more and more of secular delights and pass by the real, sterling and beneficial concerns that enrich life to the fullest. We seem to forget the eternal nature of godliness and the sovereign  
Continued On Page 4



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# Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 3)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

In this five-part study we are asking and answering the very vital query, Who Is Jesus Christ? The negative aspects of the study have been considered; now I invite you, beloved readers of Words Of Truth to the positive elements of this called-for answer.

Who is Jesus Christ? I answer that He is God, Son of God, Second Person of The Timeless Trinity and eternal in His noble nature. Predictive prophecy indicated He was God (Psalm 45:6). Isaiah said He would be virgin-conceived, virgin-born and Immanuel or God with us (7:14). The unnamed angel in Matthew 1:22, 23 declared that the coming birth of Mary's Son was the straight-line fulfillment of Isaiah's predictive statement and clear enunciation. In Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter confessed

Him as Christ, God's Son. In the giving of the Great Commission according to Matthew we read how the taught or disciplined ones are to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (28:19).

John 1:1-18 forms John's precious prologue. Among so many gems of sacred sentiments we read the following,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth (1:1-3, 14).

Of this Great and Glorious

Son of God or Deity Paul wrote in language excellent and eloquent,

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11).

The writer of Hebrews, very likely Paul, refers back to Psalm 45:6 and has the First Person to the Second Person as God (1:8). In II Corinthians 13:14 the entire Godhead is portrayed and the Christ heads the lovely list as Paul wrote, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

The Second Person of the Godhead has always existed, every Jehovah's Witness on earth to the contrary notwithstanding. Micah 5:2 refers to Him as the one that was from of old, from everlasting or from the days of eternity. John 1:15, 30 has John the Immerser referring to Christ as being before John; yet Jesus, physically speaking, was six months younger than the Messianic Harbinger. But

from the standpoint of Deity He was eternal and hence was before John the Baptist. That is why Christ could say, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Note the precise tense of verbs employed by the precise Redeemer -- was and am. Since He was both Son of man and Son of God this explains why He was both David's Son and David's Lord in Matthew 22:42-45. A close look at both Exodus 3 and Acts 7:30-38 reveals that the Eternal I AM who appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush was the Second Person of the Godhead -- not the First Person.

Minus all quibbling to the contrary Jesus Christ is both divine and human. He was divine from eternity; He became human in a point of time.

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

## The Challenge Of Modern Music #3

**David W. Hester**

Perhaps one of the most dangerous forms of modern music is rap/"hip-hop." The problem lies not in its style, but in what the music is saying, promoting, and influencing young inner city youths (both black and white) to do.

Consider the explicit sexual nature of the lyrics. Several years ago, 2 Live Crew released a CD entitled, *As Nasty As They Wanna Be*. The smash hit from that multi-platinum disc was, "Me So Horny." The title alone says enough.

Contemplate further the attitude toward women. Invariably, rappers will refer to them with obscenities, and advocate rape and violence. NWA's "Appetite for Destruction" contains these chilling lyrics: ". . . you gotta commit murder in the first degree and manslaughter/ taking the life of his wife and young daughter."

It is not just women who fall under the angry glare of

rappers. A few years back, Ice-T made headlines with his song "Cop Killer," which advocated murder of law enforcement officials. But, just in case one thinks these "artists" would never actually do such a thing, consider a couple of recent incidents.

Snoop Doggy Dogg is one of the hottest "hip-hop" singers today. His CD, *Doggystyle*, has sold several million copies. He has a current release, "Gin and Juice," which is on the Billboard Hot 100 charts, having sold several hundred thousand copies. Mr. Dogg is currently charged with being an accomplice to murder.

Tupac Shakur is another enormously successful rapper who is involved in violence. Just weeks after giving an interview on MTV with what looked to be a pistol tucked into his waist, he was arrested in Atlanta and charged with shooting two off-duty police officers.

Many more instances could be listed, but these should be

sufficient to show the extreme danger in rap/"hip-hop" music. Chuck D, the leader of the group Public Enemy, has said: "When I look at the American flag, it looks like a swastika to me." (*Washington Times*, June 21, 1989). One would be interested as to how Mr. D views the Constitution.

When a song with the title of "Bump N Grind" could make it to number two on the Billboard Hot 100 charts, (as of the week ending May 7) one should be concerned. Plainly, music which has titles such as, "You Know How We Do It," and "Pumps And A Bump," are blatantly anti-Christian.

The reaction of some to criticism of rap/"hip-hop" is curious. Dr. Dre, who has produced two CDs which have sold 7 million copies, is unrepentant. "I'm not making up these (profane) words. These words were here before I was born." He adds, "We rap about things we know. We like sex, we like smoking

weed, and that's what we rap about" (*People*, May 23, 1994). One wonders if the reaction would be the same to a group of Nazis or Communists rapping about killing millions of people.

Consider what Sinead O'Connor said in *Rolling Stone*: "I have intense admiration for 2 Live Crew. I think what they've been subjected to is disgraceful, utter racism" (October 4,

1990). In other words, "Don't confuse me with facts; my mind's already made up."

However, there is a backlash against rap/"hip-hop." Many black organizations are beginning to speak out against the explicit lyrics. Brethren who preach in the inner cities have been doing that for years! But, some higher ups in the music industry are also taking a

Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

I was recently reading an article about the alarming number of teenagers who are dying by their own hands. Programs to help troubled kids are springing up all across our country. Folks are fighting frantically to get to the youth that are at the highest risk of suicide. After all, 5000 young people die this way yearly.

Well, this next fact may shock you. The highest suicide rate isn't among teens. It is among people between the age of 75 and 84! We might sit back and think, as some of them obviously have, "What do they have to live for . . . their lives are mostly behind them." Well, hold on just a minute! The "golden years" don't have to mean the "useless years." Think about it: you have reason to live:

1. To be an example to other elderly. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works . . ." (Matthew 5:16).
  2. To show young people how to persevere in the face of adversity. How will they ever be worth anything if they're taught to be quitters when days are emotion grinders?
  3. To glorify God. Sure you've had that opportunity all your life. But never before have you had this day, at this age, under these circumstances, to praise him.
- Don't be a taker of your own life. Be a giver. Live and give whatever encouragement and praise you have to offer.

# Shining Forth As Lights In Love

Continued From Page 1

with their lips while their hearts were far from him. We must recognize that God never has and never will accept external actions without internal devotion.

But how does this relate to the concept of our theme? How does loving God in this way lead men out of darkness into the light? When we serve Christ only out of a sense of

legalistic duty, we torment our consciences. But when we serve him out of a "faith that worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), we enjoy the service and our obedience becomes a blessing rather than a burden. Remember that phrase in I John 5:3 which says that when we love God his commandments are not burdensome? A song from a few years ago entitled

"He Ain't Heavy; He's My Brother," comes near to expressing the thought. I've got to carry my fallen brother, but it doesn't seem like such a burden because of the relationship that we have. If I were given the choice of carrying around a 10 pound sack of potatoes or my 45 pound son through an amusement park for six hours, I would surely choose

my son. Although he is heavier and demands more care and attention, he seems lighter because of my love and affection for him. Likewise, when we serve the Lord out of love, his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

If the world perceives our Christianity to be a burden rather than a blessing, they will want to have nothing to

do with it. On the other hand, if we display to the world the great love in our hearts for God and the joy that serving him brings, this will serve as a beacon to lead men out of their darkness and despair into the marvelous kingdom of light.

--Southaven, Mississippi.

## The Problem Of Pleasure

Continued From Page 2

power of our Creator. A. M. Murray wisely wrote of the immutability of our Creator:

Though all the world be shattered

His truth remains the same

His righteous laws still potent

And Father still His name...

When men are lovers of pleasure more than of God (II Timothy 3:4) they squander many golden moments in lesser causes and wind up spiritually bankrupt on earth and in eternity (Acts 8:20). When tempted to take too much pride in ourselves we should recall that we were originally made out of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2). George Doane reminds us of our proper thrust in life:

Thou art the truth; Thy word

alone true wisdom can impart,

Thou only can instruct the mind and purify the heart.

We face pain, sorrow, suffering, death, trials, poverty, ignorance, loneliness, indifference, paganism and myriads of problems but, by far, our deepest concern should be our fervent quest for pleasure. Brethren are so intent on new and quicker ways to gratify the flesh that we run roughshod over purity and modesty and Bible study to follow worldly matters and carnal habits. It is becoming increasingly difficult for gospel preachers to get the attention of young couples on serious spiritual mandates due to a fun-oriented society. Just as the generation in the

days of Moses and Aaron rose up to play (Exodus 32:6) so multitudes in our era of time compromise heavenly principles to accommodate the subtle plans of Satan. Lot's wife (Luke 17:32) is the epitome of many folk today who constantly look back to a sinful world that haunts them with the dubious dainties of past pleasures. The rich man of Luke 16 clearly enunciates the folly of reveling in earthly attainments, but most people are not wise enough to consider the end results of materialism. In a powerful spiritual hymn we sing a wiser tune:

When the morning wakens

Then may I arise

Pure and fresh and sinless

In Thy holy eyes.

Epicurus, four centuries

before Christ, taught that man was wholly mortal and death meant extinction. His philosophy of eat, drink and be merry was dominant in the first century and challenged Christianity for the allegiance of the heart wherever the gospel was proclaimed. Instead of living to glorify God (I Corinthians 10:31) millions today seem bent on magnifying their own lusts. In the final Day of Judgment, many will be forever lost due to love of money, lack of concern for truth, evil companions, poor priorities and a basic attitude problem toward matters divine and eternal. Trying to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11), folk forgot to honor the name of Christ (Acts 4:12).

I often wonder what I shall

own

In that other world where I go alone,

What shall they hear and what shall they see

In the soul that answers the call for me?

Or, at the last, shall it be mine to find

All that I worked for, I left behind?

What a solemn reminder of the vanity of lust, greed, debauchery and shame! May our deepest passion be for purity, integrity and the beauty of heaven. May we seek for the pleasure of godliness as we depart from iniquity (II Timothy 2:19).

Joy without measure

Will be my treasure

Heaven holds all to me . . .

## Where Two Or Three Are Gathered Together?

Continued From Page 2

*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 (Matthew 18:15, 16).*

The two or three were gathering in the name of or by the authority of Christ in settling a matter because sin had separated brothers.

Third, Matthew 20:19, which contains Jesus words, "if two of you shall agree on anything" directly relates to the settling of the sin problem that had caused division. The verbs bound and loosed in

Matthew 20:18, have the import of something that had already taken place in heaven. Consequently, if the brother had repented he was to be forgiven, if he stubbornly refused he was to be taken before the church. The agreement of the "two" is conditioned upon the carrying out of God's will faithfully.

Finally, the gathering

together of Matthew 18:20 is in the context of meeting to settle a church problem. When settling the problem all parties involved are to remember Jesus is in "the midst of them." Jesus is saying that all parties who are settling the dispute are to remember the presence of the Lord and behave like Christians. Because Jesus is

in our midst we recognize he is another witness in any dispute we might have. Though Jesus is with us in worship, there is never a time He is not with us. The overall context of Matthew 18:20 points to our responsibility to remember Jesus in all we do and especially when settling problems.

## The Challenge Of Modern Music #3

Continued From Page 3

stand. A 1992 AP wire story relates how Hollywood Records removed its name from an explicit record. David Geffen, chairman of

Geffen Records, says: "It's not a matter of censorship. It's a matter of responsibility. You can make money selling cocaine. I choose not to." Commenting on Ice-T's "Cop

Killer," Geffen says: "I simply would not put out this kind of a record." One applauds Mr. Geffen's stand, but one wishes he would be that resolute in all of his

releases.

Clearly, rap/"hip-hop" is dangerous. Again, it's not the style of the music. It's what the music is saying. Any music which goes against

plain Bible teaching should and must be opposed. In the next article, attention will be focused upon pop/rock music.

--Rt. 4, Box 138, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

November 4, 1994

## See Articles Inside:

- How Can God Be Everywhere?
- Is A Well Chaperoned Dance Acceptable To God
- "Apostles Of Tolerance"
- Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 4)
- The Challenge Of Modern Music #4
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Unity?

Volume 31 Number 45  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words ( Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts

he

## Is The Rich Young Ruler Lost?

Neal Pollard

From the annals of biblical history comes a catalog of individuals who maintained a deep spirituality along with their deep pockets (cf. Abraham, Barzillai, Joseph of Arimathea, Barnabus, et al). God has never condemned ownership (cf. I Timothy 6:10)!

Three of the gospels record an important incident in the life of a rich young ruler, a man who was not inherently evil because of his wealth, youth, or prominent position. The thrust of this article is not to undermine any of those three traits. Nor is it the intent of this author to generalize or speculate. The task at hand is to examine the textual account of the rich young ruler in an attempt to glean its truths.

Obviously, the text does not come out and say, "And the rich young ruler went away eternally lost." Any conclusion reached would be by inference from the text. Yet, is one conclusion more plausible than the other? Please examine the three recordings (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23).

### Arguments For His Salvation Examined

"He knew about eternal life, and could only know such if Christ had promised it to him (Matthew 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18)." Two problems arise from such a statement. First, this assumes that no knowledge of eternal life existed before Christ. Admittedly, less was known before Christ, the Light, shed

greater light on the subject. However, Old Testament writers mentioned the idea of living eternally (cf. Psalm 112:6; Daniel 12:2). Moreover, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, the link between mortality and immortality. Second, this assumes that Christ did not commonly teach the subject of eternal life. In John 5:28-29, he spoke of a general resurrection of both the righteous and wicked. In Matthew 22:23-33, Jesus repelled an argument of the Sadducees by referring to the everlasting soul of man. How many other times did Christ speak about eternal life (cf. John 20:30-31)?

"Jesus said that, by selling his all to the poor, he would be perfect. Thus, such would've been what he must do to be 'perfect,' not saved." This argument misses completely the main idea of the story. What did Jesus mean by "perfect?" Did He literally mean "without flaw?" If so, what of passages such as Romans 3:10, 23, which say that no one is or will be perfect (cf. I John 1:9)? Did He mean mature? Remember, the rich young ruler was speaking out of a realization of some shortcoming on his part. Did, then, Jesus mean "complete?" Did not Jesus tell the rich young ruler what "good thing" he needed to do to have eternal life? If the rich young ruler can disregard a direct command of the Lord and be saved, does anyone have to obey any of Christ's commands?

"No one else was ever

expected to give everything to God in order to have eternal life and Christ is no respecter of persons." Truly He is not. However, to say that this man could be saved while remaining disobedient to Christ's plan of salvation for his life would make God a respecter of persons. No one today is expected to build an ark of gopher wood, but Noah surely was. No one today is expected to dip seven times in the murky waters of Jordan, but Naaman surely was. No one today should expect to enter heaven as did the thief on the cross, merely confessing Christ, but that was the way he entered. God's test of man's faith often differed from person to person before the cross, but each individual was compelled to obey those divine requirements given to him.

### Other Observations

#### From The Text

"What lack I yet?" The young man obviously knew that keeping the commandments was not enough to satisfy Christ. Nothing else explains his further expectation of **something** he must do. When Jesus responds, the ruler knew the entire list of things he had to fulfill. Just as one who repents is not exempt from baptism, this man, who kept the law of Moses, was not exempt from selling all that he had to the poor.

"He went away sorrowful (Matthew 19:22) (and) grieved (Luke 18:23)." Beginning in Genesis 1:1 and ending in Revelation 22:21, one will

carefully peruse every syllable of sacred scripture and never find another example of one who was given eternal life and who went away pouting about it. On the other hand, one will encounter an 100% rejoicing rate among every person who receives eternal life in the Bible. Is it not much more plausible that his sorrow and grief were borne out of his rejecting the plan of salvation presented to him?

### Other Passages Which Apply To This Story

Matthew 6:24. It seems this young man was trying to serve two masters. He was trying to hold to mammon. He **did** love his money more. He apparently left Jesus because of his riches.

I Timothy 6:10. A simple quotation of this verse is potent enough to make its point. Paul writes, "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" (emphasis mine).

I John 2:15-17. Money is a thing of this world and the young man surely loved it (to the point that he let it keep him from following Jesus). Could it have been one of those things John mentions in verse sixteen? Verse seventeen definitively shows that abiding forever (eternal life)? comes only by doing the will of the Father!

### Conclusion

Many times, this writer has daydreamed that this young man had time and opportunity to ponder his mistake in

leaving Jesus, turned from his error, came back to Jesus, fully obeyed Him, followed Him, and died saved. Wouldn't that be wonderful! Yet, the text does not even hint that, if it did occur. The implication of the text is that a young ruler was told to do something for eternal life, the young man refused because of his wealth, and went away sorrowful because he was not strong enough to do what was required of him for salvation. May we take the lesson taught in this story and never let anything come before God in our lives!

### A Well Kept Secret

We all learned valuable lessons a while back on the morning I was to begin a Gospel meeting. Thinking the church building was on the main highway leading through the little town, I did not get specific instructions before time. After driving through the town on that highway, and not seeing any sign of the building, I stopped to ask directions. Didn't know. I stopped again and again. They didn't know. When I stopped at my fourth place that didn't know, I asked the lady to call the local police and ask them. They knew, and gave me directions.

This may be an unrecognized problem with many of our churches. Let me suggest that a deacon (since this perhaps fall within his line of work), drive into your town with the mindset of a newcomer. How hard is it to find the building where the saints meet? Is the path clearly marked on the main roads? Is there a good sign in front of the building that can be easily seen and which has appropriate information?

Furthermore, we might consider advertising our location more to the townsfolk. Let's make the location of our meeting house WIDELY known! The Editor

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## How Can God Be Everywhere?

Glenn Colley

I have never heard the word "omnipresent" used to describe anyone or anything but Jehovah. It means, "Present everywhere at once, (Webster)." And when you consider the extremes to which God pushes the boundaries of "everywhere," you quickly realize that no one else, and nothing else, could possibly wear the title. Only God is omnipresent. He is Everywhere.

There are some passages of scripture which make lovers of truth feel they should take off their shoes because they are walking on "holy ground." Psalm 139 is such a passage. The psalmists marvels at the omnipresence of God:

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell (sheol), behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: Even there shall

Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me . . ."

"But," someone might wonder, "I thought God was in heaven. How can He be everywhere if He is described as being in Heaven? And furthermore, if He is everywhere, couldn't you equally say He is in America, or China, or the Moon?" Why would you single out heaven?

God is in heaven. Jesus often used the phrase, "Your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16, 5:45, 5:48, 6:1, 7:11, 18:14) or, "My Father which is in heaven," (Matthew 5:16, 5:45, 5:48, 6:1, 7:11, 18:14) or, "My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21, 10:32, 10:33, 12:50, 16:17, 18:19). Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, (Matthew 6:9)." On that great morning of His resurrection Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to the Father, (John 20:7)."

Since God is clearly in His heaven, how then can it be said that He is omnipresent? The answer is in His knowledge and power. His knowledge

comprehends all things. Nothing is outside the boundaries of His constant knowledge or power. For this reason it can truthfully be said that God is the God of heaven and earth, and that He would be there waiting for the Psalmist if he sought Him in heaven, or in the grave, or in the East, (The "wings" of the morning are the rays of the sun as it rises in the East), or in the West, (The "sea" the Psalmist refers to is the Mediterranean sea, to his West). Our God is everywhere!

Jeremiah 23:24 says, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord, Do not I fill heaven and earth? Saith the Lord."

How, dear reader, do you respond to the thoughts of God's omnipresence? Whether it is a warm comfort of security to you, or a chilly thought you prefer to ignore, is determined by whether or not your sins are forgiven?

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it, (Psalm 139:6)."

## Is A Well Chaperoned Dance Acceptable To God?

W. A. Holley

History tells us that dancing was popular among the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Hebrews, and the Romans. But such activities cannot prove their activities were acceptable to God. The Holy Bible is God's rule-book (II Timothy 3:15-17; Revelation 22:18-19). Any activity

whether in word or deed that violates the principles of Scriptural conduct is a sin before God (Romans 3:23; James 2:9-10; I John 1:6-10).

The Jewish dance was performed by the sexes separately. David danced alone (II Samuel 6:14). But David's example cannot be used to justify dancing under

New Testament guidance (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12; 9:16-17). David committed adultery. Should we follow his example here? (II Samuel 11:2). Hereodias's daughter won the head of John the Baptist through her voluptuous dance. Would you recommend such today?

Continued On Page 4

# "Apostles Of Tolerance"

Mel Futrell

"Apostles of tolerance" was the phrase used by TV Guide columnist Harry Stein to describe many of those who write, criticizing him for being intolerant towards those who promote a morally bankrupt agenda via television. One paragraph later he was critical (and rightly so) of ABC's airing of "the lesbian kiss" episode of Roseanne which was shown on Tuesday night, March 1st of this year. I'm not a purveyor of the Roseanne sitcom but I did tune in when it was announced that Rosanne Arnold and Mariel Hemingway would be kissing one another full on the mouth. Sure enough, they did. What Muriel Hemingway does should not come as a surprise to any of us. You may remember she was the actress who "bare it all" last year on the show "Civil Wars."

Let's take a moment brethren and critique this idea of tolerance that is currently being pushed upon us. It would be my judgment that once again the ungodly and immoral of our society have stolen from us a legitimate word - Tolerance. As Brother Earl Edwards stated in the January 1994 issue of the Gospel Advocate, "But one must remember that tolerance no longer means allowing others the legal right to exercise a faith you hold to

be distorted and incorrect. Instead, it means having to embrace all doctrines and viewpoints (no matter how absurd and immoral) as equally valid." So, what we're faced with brethren, is a society that does not recognize an objective standard of morality. A society that cries out for personal rights, freedom, and liberty yet, attempts to deny the same to those of us who would make our voices heard in opposition to what they are saying. A society where political correctness has become the preeminent concept. A society where those depicted as abnormal are the ones who believe lesbian kissing, etc., is abnormal and sinful. God-forbid that someone should stand up and say enough is enough. I wish it were not so, but people seem to be more concerned with "offending" someone or "imposing" their value system on another than with promoting what is right and cannot be wrong. If the latter is intolerance than I am intolerant.

One cannot be morally neutral and be right. And our President can't talk family values out of one side of his mouth and promote homosexuality and abortion out of the other and be pleasing to God. As our society continues to bombard us with statements like, Continued On Page 4



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# Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 4)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

This five-part series deals with a precious, profitable and paramount question -- Who Is Jesus Christ? Thus far the study has been pursued both negatively and positively. The previous article set Him forth as Deity, as Son of God, as "God with us" -- the stately significance of Immanuel as employed by Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:13.

Who is Jesus Christ? I answer that He became a man, the Son of man. Some eighty or more times in the New Testament Jesus called Himself the Son of man. It was one of his favorite and most frequently employed designations of Himself while tabernacling here in the flesh. Here are a few of the places in which He did this. In Matthew 16:13 he said, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" In Matthew 20:38 we read, "Even as the Son of

man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Jesus stated in Luke 9:58, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." In Luke 19:10 He gave the reason for the Messianic mission by stating, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

In the gentleness of Gethsemane Jesus said, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" In the vision afforded the dying Stephen in Acts 7 the about-to-be-stoned saint said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Paul wrote the young gospel preacher, Timothy, these words of weight and wisdom in I Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God

and men, the man Christ Jesus..."

Why did He become a man? It was essential that He be human if He were going to become a sacrifice for our sins. This is why His Father gave Him a body as per Hebrews 10:5ff. Earlier the Hebrew penman, in all probability Paul, had written,

Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted... For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (2:17, 18; 4:15).

He became a man so we could the more easily identify

with Him as we pass along the journey of life. One religion of our day, Romanism, has made an egregious error in seeking to make Jesus so remote and inaccessible to humanity that He has to be approached through someone like Mary or a departed saint. Not so! He is very near the contrite and sincere of heart at all times.

But again, who is Jesus Christ? I answer that He is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. John the Baptist is spoken of by Isaiah in chapter 40 and Malachi does so in the closing part of the Old Testament. Paul and Peter, as prominent as they would be in the advancement of Christianity in the first century, are not objects of precise predictive prophecies in the Old Testament. Yet amazingly, the Christ is portrayed by prophecy

hundreds of times in the Old Testament. An excellent biography could be written of Him by just the employment of predictive prophecy relative to Him. This is remarkably relevant to the current query we are investigating in this literary series.

Who is Jesus Christ? He is our prophet, priest and king. The opening three verses of profound Hebrews so attest. God now speaks to us by His Son. This sets Him forth as prophet of mouthpiece. He has made an offering or purged our sins. This sets Him forth as priest. He rules our lives at Jehovah's right hand of power. This establishes Him as king -- king RIGHT NOW premillennialism to the contrary notwithstanding.

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

## The Challenge Of Modern Music #4

**David W. Hester**

Woodstock 94 was held August 12-15 at Saugerties, New York. The event attracted about 255,000 people, half the number who made up the first Woodstock in 1969. Although attempts were made to confiscate drugs and alcohol, early reports indicated they were easy to obtain. In addition, Shannon Moon of Blind Melon wore barrettes and a dress and removed his underwear onstage (Time, Aug. 22, 1994). Rapper B-Real of Cypress Hill smoked a marijuana cigarette while performing. Three deaths were reported, along with numerous arrests.

This event succinctly describes the state of popular music today. While there are songs which are not obscene and performers who do not resort to immorality in promoting their work, they are few in number. If one peruses the Billboard Hot 100, he immediately observes

merial at odds with New Testament Christianity.

Such groups as Cypress Hill and the Black Crowes are outspoken in their desire to legalize marijuana. Guns N' Roses glorifies alcohol in its videos and records songs with profanities throughout. The clothes worn by many performers are immodest, to say the least. The names of some of the groups are very suggestive. (Porno for Pyros comes to mind). Of course, that's exactly the point for many of the performers. They wish to flout authority, thumb their noses at parents, and ridicule religion. However, if one attempts to subject them to scrutiny, they will invariably disavow any adverse results among young people who closely follow their music. "Hey, it's just music, man! We don't take this seriously." This seems to be a bit disingenuous. With great popularity also comes great responsibility.

Michael Jackson, by far, is

the richest entertainer in pop music. He owns ATV Music Publishing catalogue, which contains many of the Beatles songs, the Neverland ranch in California, and commands multi million dollar deals with Sony and EMI. However, the singer recently was "Notorious" for his alleged relationship with a 13-year-old boy. Although Jackson settled out of court, there have been numerous other allegations made. The performer's personal habits and appearance have already aroused much speculation as to his state of mind.

Jackson demonstrates a lack of modesty when performing onstage, as has been frequently shown on television. His videos of recent date have become stranger and stranger. Although he has married Lisa Marie Presley, one wonders if the relationship is more financial than romantic.

Madonna has been one of the most prominent female

performers of the past ten years. Her CDs have sold millions of copies. However, her much-publicized lifestyle is an open attack against New Testament Christianity. Her most recent videos have become increasingly explicit. An appearance on Late Night With David Letterman this year only confirmed her reputation, as she used explicit profanities in talking with the host.

The performer who was known as Prince has now changed his name to a combination of the signs for male and female, and now wears androgynous clothes onstage. His career hasn't exactly boomed since the change.

We could go on and on about performers and groups who have recorded songs that are anti-Christian, but these Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

**Think of this: We spend one-fifth of our lives talking. That, of course, doesn't mean we're always being understood, but at least we are attempting to communicate.**

**With talking and listening being such an important and time-consuming part of our lives, it's no wonder that God's word, the Bible, has so much to say on the subject. For example, consider James 1:19, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath." What this implies is that we may sometimes have a problem with talking, when we should be listening. Think of how our marriages could be helped if we were swift to hear and slow to speak! Think of how much easier parent-teenager relationships would be if all concerned were swift to hear and slow to speak and slow to wrath! Another example of how the Bible really does have the answers to a happy, productive life. Proverbs 15:23 says, "A word in due season, how good it is."**

## "Apostles Of Tolerance"

Continued From Page 2  
"standards have changed" we must insist that the standard of right and wrong has not nor will it ever change. God's moral/Biblical standard

abides forever (I Peter 1:25). The apostle Peter said, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually

immoral nor idolators nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will

inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-19).

Some today, no doubt, will continue to call for "tolerance," but God calls for repentance.

--904 Randall Ave., Daphne, AL 36526-0038.

# Is A Well Chaperoned Dance Acceptable To God?

Continued From Page 2  
(Matthew 14:6; Mark 6:22).

As strange as it may seem, there are some Birmingham denominational churches which promote the dance as a means of worship to God. That is like taking the devil's tools to worship God. One young girl was heard to say, "I have a talent for dancing; I am determined to use my talent to worship God." How ridiculous! We can worship Him only according to His will (John 4:23-24). One may have a "talent" for adultery or gambling, but can one use such talent(?) to worship God?

Dancing is lascivious, for it stirs the lust of the flesh. Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines lasciviousness as "indecent bodily movement, unchaste handling of males or

females." The works of the flesh are identified in Galatians 5:19-21, as "adultery, fornication, lasciviousness . . . reveling and such like . . . they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

What does "reveling and such like," mean? The Twentieth Century Dictionary defines reveling as "a feast with noisy jollity, carousing or spectacular dance." Hence, the word we are describing designates the practice of shameless immorality, both ancient and modern.

All Bible believers will agree that dancing is of the world. Dancing cannot produce spirituality. It is powerless to do so. The Christian must not love the sinful things of the world (I John 2:15-17). We must shun

any form of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22). All right-thinking people will agree that dancing appeals to the baser sense of decency or propriety.

If there is no danger in dancing, why have a chaperone? If dancing has no evil tendencies, why have any restraints? What is the evil of dancing? Let us face the stark truth. The close embrace of a man and a woman, a teenage boy and a girl, who are not husband and wife, destroys the safeguards of moral purity: purity of thought, good influence, respect, homes, spirituality and souls (Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32; 19:3-9). Truly, dancing is not Christian recreation.

What godly husband would love to see his wife wrapped up in the arms of another

man? What Christian woman would like to see her husband in the close embrace of another woman? A truthful answer to those questions will disclose how depraved some men and women have become!

Note this statement from a medical doctor: "The modern dance is the fine art of covering with music, indelicate, immodest, and oftentimes indecent attitudes and postures between men and women. It is too bad for reformation. Its only remedy is extermination." (The Carnival Of Death, P. 70, Dr. A. C. Dixon).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of

God" (I Corinthians 10:31-32, ASV). Dancing cannot glorify God Almighty!

No, dancing is not right and the fact that it is popular does not make it right. Chaperoning evil does not remove the evil. Sin is sin regardless of the cloak it wears. Why not chaperone gambling? or adultery? or lying? or murder?

Some argue that dancing is good exercise. Let us take a sober thought. If dancing is done for exercise and for exercise alone, why is it not as much fun if women dance with women, and men with men? Enough said.

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

## The Challenge Of Modern Music #4

Continued From Page 3  
should suffice to show there is a problem. As in any type of music, if it is against New Testament Christianity, it should not be supported. The

groups invariably will gloat about the lack of support from parents and authorities, but such is not proof of the groups being right.

Teenagers (and all people)

must compare the music they listen to with the Word of God! If we claim to be Christians and do not put the kingdom of God first in everything, we are falling

short (Matthew 6:33).

There are good songs to hear in pop music. There are clean groups. One must simply be a discriminating listener. Pay attention to what

the music says!

In the next article, we will examine "Christian" music and see whether it is in keeping with God's Word.

## Unity?

**Mike Benson**  
"Why should petty doctrinal differences divide the religious world? I think all religious groups should fellowship one another as long as they believe in the deity of Christ. Unity should be our main objective . . ."

You are correct, unity should be our main objective, for Christ himself prayed for such, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe

in Me through their word; that they all may be one . . ." (John 17:20-21a). However, a careful examination of the Scriptures will reveal that unity can never be realized until men:

1. Continue in. "And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

2. Walk in. "This is the announcement which we have

heard from him, and we are proclaiming to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him! If we say that we are having fellowship with him, and if we are walking in the darkness, we are lying, and we are not practicing the truth. But if we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, we continue in fellowship with one another; and the blood of Jesus his Son continues to cleanse us from every sin" (I John 1:5-7).

and

3. Abide in --

the teaching, the truth, the doctrine of Christ. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (II John 9).

The Bible teaches, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is ONE body and

ONE Spirit, just as you were called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism; ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:3-6).

How can men have unity in ONE Lord, when they do not have unity in ONE faith which originated with the Lord?

--306 W. 4th St., Parsons, TN 38363.

November 11, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- America's Greatest Inconsistency
- "A One Man Show"
- Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 5)
- A Contribution Or A Commitment!
- "Most Of A Minute"
- The Challenge Of Modern Music #5
- Impossibility Of Apostasy

Volume 30 Number 46  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words ( ) Truth

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

## This Is Going To Sting A Little

Allen Webster

Nurses always say it. And they always *underestimate*. The needle looks a lot longer and feels a lot bigger on the receiving end. Why do we have to go through the "stings" of life? Why did they ever invent needles? Can't they come up with a better way? After all, these are modern times. Men have walked on the moon. We can be on the other side of the world overnight. Yet they still haven't figured out a way to take the "sting" out of medical practice. Needles are necessary.

Life has internal stings as well -- broken hearts, crushed ambitions, crashed dreams. These usually smart for much longer than the kind nurses inflict. Do you ever wonder, "Why me, Lord? I'm a Christian. I walk the strait and narrow way. I try to avoid trouble and sin. But now I've been 'stung.' Why me?" There are things we may not fully understand until we get to heaven, but we do get some insights into this question from God's Word. Do the "stings" of life have a positive purpose?

LIFE'S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO "SOBER UP." Our world runs from troubles like Superman from kryptonite. The third biggest business in the world is entertainment (behind the U.S. Government and the Catholic church). America's philosophy is "eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die" (Ecclesiastes 8:15; Luke 12:19, 20). "Get away from it all. Escape!" Those who don't

try to escape, try to hide. Millions try to escape life's stings by "drowning them in a bottle" only to be "stung" by a different kind of bee (cf. Proverbs 23:32).

The world wants to laugh. It hates to mourn. Jesus said, "Woe to you that laugh now! For ye shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:25) and "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). Jesus wept. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:2-5, 7). We have no record that Jesus ever laughed (once He "rejoiced in spirit," Luke 10:21). He was angry (John 2:13-17; Mark 3:5), hungry (Luke 4:2), and thirsty (John 4:7; 19:29), but never laughing. We do, though, have a record of His tears (John 11:35; Luke 19:41-44; Hebrews 5:5-7).

It is altogether too easy for us to imbibe the world's spirit if everything always goes our way all the time. Our roots tend to run horizontally as long as there is plenty of water. But we need the stability of a vertical root system. That's why God sends dry spells. He wants serious-minded people in His family. Aged men are to be "sober, grave, temperate" (Titus 2:2). Aged women are to teach the young women to be "sober" (2:3). "The young men likewise are exhorted to be sober-minded" (2:6). The word *sober* (*sophronizo*) means "circumspect; sensible; mature." Sorrows help us to be sober-minded.

I walked a mile with Pleasure, she chattered all the

way,

But left me none the wiser for all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow, and ne'er a word said she,

But, oh, the things I learned from her when Sorrow walked with me.

Robert Browning  
Hamilton

LIFE'S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO "LOOK UP." "Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth" (Ecclesiastes 7:3, 4). The word translated *is made better* (*yatab*) means "make well, sound, beautiful, happy, successful, or right" (Strong, 3190, 49). Sorrow can turn us to God. The person who is incapable of genuine tears is also incapable of real joy.

\*"The soul would have no rainbow had the eye no tears" (John Vance Cheney).

\*"All sunshine makes a desert" (Arab proverb).

\*"Into each life some rain must fall" (Longfellow).

The prodigal did not look up until his money ran out (Luke 15). It was only after he knew the pangs of hunger and the stench of the pig pen that he decided that there was more to life than riotous living. Abe Lincoln is credited with saying, "I have often been driven to my knees by the sincere conviction that there was no where else to go." So it is with many people. Bee stings make us look for the

medicine cabinet. Life's stings make us look for the Great Physician.

LIFE'S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO "CHANGE UP." Many have not considered the need to change and get right with God until stung with painful circumstances. The Philippian Jailor went to work one night totally oblivious to the fact that in a few hours his world would be in a shape that he would attempt to take his own life (Acts 16). But an earthquake came, and he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. He knew that the Romans would require his life for theirs and thought he would save them the trouble. But out of the darkness Paul's voice came: "We are all here." Thus, he had a change of heart and was receptive to the Gospel. Just minutes before, he was totally disinterested. Now he's asking what he needs to do and quickly obeys it (16:31-34). What happened? He was "stung" with the unfavorable circumstances of life and it made him "change up."

We may not fully understand the reason for the stings of life as they happen. But as the old song says, "Farther along we'll know all about it. Farther along we'll understand why. So cheer up, my brother, we'll understand it all bye and bye." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17).

Not until each loom is silent and the shuttles cease

Will God unroll the pattern and explain the reason why

The dark threads are as needful in the Weaver's skillful hand

As the threads of gold and silver for the pattern which He planned.

My life is but the weaving between God and me.

I only choose the colors He weaveth steadily.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride;

Forget He sees the upper and I the under side.

Remember, "The crown of all crowns was made of thorns" (cf. James 1:2-4).

Interestingly, the New Testament speaks of "stings" (*kentron*, used five times). By examining these, we find how to remove many of life's "stings." It is twice translated "prick" (Acts 9:5; 26:14). As one is pricked with a needle to be cured of many illnesses, one's conscience must be pricked with the Gospel so he can be cured of the "soul's diseases." The other times it is translated "sting" (I Corinthians 15:55, 56; Revelation 9:10). Paul explains that Christians avoid the sting of death, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:55-57).

Yes, this world is going to sting a little, but there'll be no needles in heaven.

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## America's Greatest Inconsistency

Glenn Colley

Two of the biggest news stories in the past few weeks have swirled around two killers. In totally separate incidents they both killed two people.

One was Susan V. Smith in Union, South Carolina, who buckled her two sons, 3-year-old Michael and 14-month-old Alex, into the back seat of the car and drove it into a lake. The bodies of the two boys were found on November 3rd. According to reports, upon hearing the news, dozens of people crowded around the county courthouse in Union and gasped as the Sheriff described the mother's arrest. Several sobbed. Evidently she killed her children and then perpetuated the hoax that a carjacker had taken them away.

The other was Paul Hill, the 40-year-old man in Pensacola, Florida who some time ago shot an abortion doctor and his body guard as they were going into an abortion clinic. At the writing of this article, the jury has recommended the electric chair but the judge has not passed judgment.

There seems to me to be a great deal of irony involved in all this. Think about it: Our nation is outraged at what took place a few days ago in Union, South Carolina. Susan Smith killed her little children. Her violent act is opposed to everything we consider to be decent and moral and right.

While I would not justify what Mr. Hill did, (because it was illegal and because there are arguably better ways to deal with the problem), and I would discourage anyone who wanted to repeat his actions, I do understand what and how he thinks. I believe if you asked him about the death of those two South Carolina boys, he would in turn ask you a

series of heart-searching questions. They would, I think, be something like this: "What if the 14-month-old child had been 10 months old? Would you feel the same against the mother then? What if the child had been a 4-month-old. What then?" Then I think he'd look you right in the eye and ask, "What if the child was two days younger than that, still in the mother's womb, and killed not by drowning, but by an abortionist's knife. What would you say then?"

Realize with me, be shocked with me, and be sad with me, at the fact that some people among us, to be consistent, would shift emotions from anger toward the one doing the killing. If the mother killed the baby a day *before* birth, instead of a day *after* birth, they would support the mother and the abortionist publicly, politically, and would elect leaders who would keep the practice legal. An example of this mentality is demonstrated in the fact that we've heard much more news about the Paul Hill case during the last twelve months than we've heard about the 1.5 million abortions performed in America in that same amount of time. Our legislators intend to protect abortionists and their allies at all costs.

Furthermore, suppose a police officer had seen Mrs. Smith in the act of killing her children, and had ordered her to stop. Suppose she had persisted and the only way to thwart her crime was for the officer to shoot her. Would he not justifiably be considered a hero? Food for thought.

My question to those who haven't quite decided what they think about the abortion issue is simple. What is the difference in killing a 14-month-old baby, and killing that *same* baby 15

months earlier? I see no relevant difference.

In Luke 1:41 the Bible says, "And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." You should understand that the original Greek word for "babe" in this verse is pronounced, "Brephos." It becomes very interesting when we read Luke 2:12, "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." In this verse the original word for "babe" is also "Brephos." Here is the unavoidable point: When the Holy Spirit revealed these words to Luke the physician, he used the same word when describing an *unborn baby*, and a *born baby*! That is further interesting when you consider that in America the pro-choice crowd has changed the way they describe an unborn baby to contrast with a born baby. They say "fetus," or "fetal tissue." God's word admits no such difference. Why? I suggest to you it is because God sees no value difference between a born baby and an unborn baby.

Psalms 127:3, "Lo children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward."

Psalms 139:13, 14, "For Thou hast possessed my reins; Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."

Don't be swayed by the inconsistencies of the masses. When the world about you seems increasingly confused, keep your feet on the ground by growing in knowledge and faith of the scriptures, II Timothy 3:16, 17.

## "A One Man Show"

Mel Futrell

Without a doubt, the organization of the local church is a divine principle. It was never GOD's intention that the church be governed by only one man - thus, the independent, autonomous nature of the local church with its plurality of overseers (see Acts 14:23, I Corinthians 1:2, Philippians 1:1). Nevertheless, the record of history is that "The writings of Ignatius of Antioch to the churches of Asia Minor early in the second century describe a three-fold ministry of one bishop, a plurality of elders, and deacons in the churches. The emergence of the single bishop at the head of the local church seems to be a fact for Asia and Antioch at the beginning of the second century" (Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak*, 1987, pp. 15-16). The evidence seems to indicate that this "Ignatian pattern" spread throughout the churches and that, "By the time of Origin in the third century the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyters, and deacons was everywhere accepted" (Ferguson, p. 177). And all familiar with church history know where, and to what, all this monepiscopacy led. But it is not my purpose to charter the development of the monarchical bishop system. Rather, I am more concerned about the Lord's church where there is NOT a single bishop system.

It is often the case that one man within the eldership so dominates his fellows that the divine arrangement of oversight is thwarted. Brethren, it has always disturbed and amazed me how one man can work his way into such a position that he literally controls the lives of all those who surround him. Paul's prediction in Acts 20:30, "Also

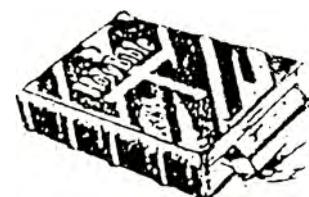
of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," may offer the motivation that some have for seeking such a dominate position. Why it is that such cannot or will not heed the words of Jesus is beyond me. Matthew 20:25-27 says, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

The New Testament book of Third John contains some material that speaks to this matter. The apostle John sketches out for us three characters in his short volume: Gaius who is dependable, Diotrephes who is domineering, and Demetrius who is the deliverer. Naturally, the character Diotrephes is the focus of our attention. Please consider the words of the inspired penman.

"I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content there with, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

I would concede that it cannot be said with any certainty that Diotrephes was an elder in the local church. But clearly his intention was to dominate the whole church. Three things need to be remembered about Diotrephes:

1. He refused to practice hospitality (vs. 9). NOTE: The context suggests that hospitality Continued On Page 4



### The Words Of Truth

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# Who Is Jesus Christ? (No. 5)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

With this article I continue and conclude our five-part study of a very vital question, Who is Jesus Christ? We have dealt with misconceptions relative to Him. We have depicted the Biblical portrait of Him by suggesting that He is Deity; He is humanity; He is the striking fulfillment of Old Testament predictive prophecy; He is prophet; He is priest; He is king.

Again I ask, Who is Jesus Christ? I answer that He is Lord and Saviour. And these concepts CANNOT be severed as Crossroads has attempted in their erroneous doctrine of "Lordship baptism." We must accept the Comprehensive Christ else we accept NONE of Him. He does not come in piecemeal fashion; He is not a Cafeteria Christ -- accept what you desire and reject the rest.

The unnamed angel in Matthew 1 told perplexed

Joseph that the name of Mary's Son was to be Jesus "for he shall save his people from their sins" (v. 21). The very day of His birth in Bethlehem of Judea angelic testimony declared this of Him to Judean shepherds just outside Bethlehem, the house of bread where the Bread of Life had just been born,

Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10, 11).

Relative to Him as Lord Peter declared on that memorable Pentecost, "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). Somewhat later in the book of Acts this same Peter again declared of Him, "Him hath

God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). Speaking of Him as the sacrificial Saviour Paul wrote,

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father . . . But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons . . . Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Galatians 1:4; 4:4; Titus 2:14).

**CLOSING EXHORTATIONS**

My warm friends, I wonder if you and I have proper

appreciation of the infinite worth of the Christ of Calvary. Is so, what have we done to exhibit this felt gratitude? Allow me to illustrate. In our country there used to be a law about how one could serve militarily. When about to be conscripted he had one of three options: (1) Go himself; (2) pay the government a certain amount if rich enough or could borrow enough; or (3) send a substitute in his place. During the War Between the States, 1861-65, there was a man about to be inducted. He was married and had several children to support. He was 28 years old. A teen-age boy in that community who had no such obligations learned of this and begged to go in his place. The older man was reluctant at first but later allowed him to go in his place. Four months later he was slain in battle and his body brought home for

burial. At his graveside the man in whose place he had gone erected a monument on which was inscribed, "He died in my place." The application is obvious; Jesus died in our place. Have we shown Him gratitude by obeying His gospel and living for Him? We obey by hearing Christ, believing in His Deity, repenting of sins, confessing His Sonship to God and baptism in water for or unto remission of sins (Matthew 17:5; John 8:21, 24; Luke 13:3, 5; Romans 10:9, 10; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Such ushers us into the kingdom of God. A life of faithfulness is then required. What about you, Dear Reader?

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

## A Contribution Or A Commitment!

**Don Williams**

The story is told of a pig and a chicken that were busy after a long day's work. The chicken said, "I have never worked so hard in all my life. That family must have used a dozen eggs all in one day. I am so tired." "Tired, nothing," said the pig. "With you, all you have to provide is a contribution. For them to have sausage or pork, I have to make a real commitment."

The story re-enacts what some do in the church when the contribution plate comes around. HOW MANY OF US STOP AND REALLY THINK ABOUT OUR GIVING VERSUS WHAT OUR LORD DID FOR US?

Have we really counted His cost on our behalf? Paul tells us that we need to give to God as we have prospered. In I Corinthians 16:2, Paul writes, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be NO gatherings when I come." Is there any way that we can ascertain the value of our

Lord's death on our behalf? Surely no money in all the world would equal what He did for us on that hill of Calvary. The greatest of gifts demand that we return in the same way. How dare we give only a token contribution, when GOD GAVE TO US THE VERY BEST?

If one decides to give his life to Christ, he must make a total commitment to God. Jesus says that we must die to self and take up his way of life. In Matthew 16:24, He says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." A token following of Jesus is not enough. Later, He will make the comment, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

When we make that commitment to be baptized into Christ, we die to self. Our lives, yes, even our money, become His. (It is His already). How sad if we decide not to make a real commitment unto God in terms of what we give unto Him! I like the story of

the man who was about to be baptized. The preacher suggested that he empty his pockets as they were to get into the water. He noticed the man's billfold in the back pocket and reminded him of it. He was about to pull it out when he said, "no, go ahead and baptize it as well." He understood something about the commitment he was about to get into. WE REALLY GIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE GIVE UNTO GOD. WE ARE SAYING "GOD, I TRUST YOU WITH ALL THAT I HAVE; HERE IS WHAT I LOVINGLY GIVE YOU, KNOWING YOU WILL PROVIDE FOR ME EVERY NEED AND THEN SOME." That is what the Macedonian brethren did. Out of their poverty, they were willing to give for the needs of the saints in Judea. Their attitude in giving is seen in the following statement. "And this they did, not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God" (II Corinthians 8:5).

## Position Open

Following the recent resignation of Joe Spivey from our work at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, we are currently seeking a man to fill our Associate Ministers (Youth/Education) position. Resumes are now being accepted for consideration. They should be mailed to:

Attn.: Elders  
Sixth Avenue Church Of Christ  
1501 Sixth Avenue  
Jasper, AL 35501

## "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Don't you love the fall of the year? I don't believe any artist could fully capture the vibrant colors of the autumn. The trees are just on fire with color.

The changing of seasons effect some folks with a gentle nudge toward sober-mindedness. Many poets have compared the changing of seasons with the gradual aging of people. Spring is infancy, summer is youth, autumn is middle age, winter is old age.

Solomon pondered this in Ecclesiastes 12, and described the changing of the body as we grow old. He finally concluded with these words of truth: "then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (vs. 7).

So how do we react to the rapid changing of seasons in our lives? The bottom of the chapter says, "Hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments. For this is the whole duty of man."

# "A One Man Show"

Continued From Page 2  
was being shown by supporting faithful Gospel teachers who were travelling among the brethren. One who did such was said to be a "fellow-helper to the truth."

2. He refused fellowship to those who would practice hospitality (vs. 10).

3. He was guilty of slandering John, a brother in Christ (vs. 10).

It is my judgment that the spirit of Diotrephes is alive today

among some in the church. They have as their goal the domination of "the flock of God" (I Peter 5:2-3). Some may even want their own church. What we see in this Diotrephes attitude and action is a departure

from the Divine pattern through the exaltation of men. And any student of church history is aware of what happens when such heresies are not put down. It is indeed unfortunate, but the desire for preeminence in the

Lord's church has always hindered God's work. The church of Christ is just not a one man show.

--904 Randell Ave., Daphne, AL 36526-0038.

## The Challenge Of Modern Music #5

David W. Hester

Contemporary "Christian" music is one of the fastest growing segments of the music industry. Unlike the traditional quartet groups of the past, the performers among the current style adopt the forms of popular music, while attempting to promote what they consider to be the "Gospel." Several acapella groups have gained popularity; some are comprised of members of the Lord's church. Our young people are being attracted to this trend, partly due to the immorality which is seen in popular music. What should be our response?

First, one must apply the same standards to contemporary "Christian" music that he applies to any other. Not all of the performers live morally upright lives. Consider the case of Michael English. He received

seven awards at the 1994 Dove Awards in Nashville. Among them were: Male Vocalist Of The Year, Artist Of The Year, and Contemporary Album Of The Year.

However, Mr. English had some skeletons in his closet which were quickly made public. It turns out that he had been involved in an illicit relationship with one of his backup singers. To compound the problem, both of them were married. Mr. English promptly confessed, and offered to give the awards back. The "Christian" music community was stunned.

One may ask, "What does that have to do with the music? Everyone sins." True, but consider this. Many of the artists involved in this style of music will claim it is a ministry. Some will also say they are "witnessing" with their music

and performances. All too often, the lives contradict the claim.

Second, ponder the message of the music. In many cases, what the artists are singing promotes false doctrine about the church, salvation, and other Bible issues. Some will promote broad fellowship with anyone and everyone. Even Acapella has recorded songs in the past which promote false teaching.

Third, the question of "ministry" must be addressed. If these artists are engaged in a ministry, then it is an unscriptural ministry. They frequently will use instrumental music in their performances. If, as some of them claim, they are "worshipping" God, their worship is in vain (Matthew 15:9). Also, the practice of "witnessing" is totally without basis in Scripture. Only the apostles were eyewitnesses of

the Lord (Acts 1:21-22).

Fourth, proper reverence for God and Christ is sometimes lacking. While watching a Huntsville news broadcast concerning contemporary "Christian" music, I was aghast to see a "Christian" rap group perform what was purportedly a spiritual song. The refrain was, "Who's in the house?/J. C." If ever there was an example of improper reverence to our Lord, that was it.

But, some Christian parents and children will defend the music, saying, "It's a lot cleaner than today's popular music - and, it promotes a good message." The latter point is in much dispute, since a denominational message is too often pushed. However, it is true that this style of music is cleaner than popular music.

Nevertheless, there is a danger

in prolonged listening to contemporary "Christian" music. The message could take root and gain influence among young people, and lead them away from the truth of God's Word. As with any form of music, one must be a discriminating listener. It takes careful study, though, to compare the lyrics of these songs to the Bible.

No, contemporary "Christian" music is not a totally safe alternative. Parents must first teach their children the right ways of the Lord, live it in their lives, and promote only those things which will help them grow in a spiritual way. It is not easy, but it can be done.

The final article will deal with the reaction of both parents and children to the challenge of modern music.

## Impossibility Of Apostasy

Stephen Wiggins

"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul . . . 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 whatever to do with the salvation of his soul" (Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher).

The preceding shows what is involved in the false doctrine of "once saved, always saved." Those who subscribe to this denominational error think it is utterly impossible for a child of God to backslide into a life of sin and unfaithfulness so as to finally be lost in hell. They suppose once an individual has been saved there is absolutely nothing on earth one can do to lose their salvation -- not even by committing the sin of idolatry or murder.

I cannot recall ever having heard or read anything that is more diametrically opposed to biblical truth than this doctrine of impossibility of apostasy. This heresy logically implies that a child of God could become guilty of the grossest sins imaginable, die in that sinful condition short of repentance, and yet still be

counted as a faithful Christian at the judgment. And it is this type of blind foolishness one must believe in order to be a member of most denominations.

I wish to appeal to the Bible so as to refute this doctrine as erroneous. In Revelation 3:15-16 we have these words to the church at Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Here we have the Lord's total rejection and utter repudiation of some who had become negligent and slothful in living the Christian life. These lukewarmers were repulsive to Christ and he demanded repentance on their part. Without repentance they would be eternally lost.

If the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" is biblical then one of two things would have to be true. (1) Either it would be impossible for a Christian to become lukewarm; or, (2) the Lord would be forced to accept lukewarm Christians into heaven. But since both of the preceding statements are not true it then follows that the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy is false. First, it is obvious that a Christian can become lukewarm because Jesus said to his church at

Laodicea "thou art lukewarm." Second, it is also obvious the Lord will not accept any lukewarm Christians into heaven but rather will "spew them out of his mouth" as repulsive rejects. See how easy the silly falsehoods of Satan can be answered?

Furthermore, I wish the reader to see how this devilish assertion turns the language of the Bible into unintelligible garble. Whereas the denominational preacher will maintain that a child of God cannot "fall away" from God, this is really the very terminology used by inspired writers to convey one could apostatize into unfaithfulness. Read some scripture and see; "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in anyone of you an evil heart of unbelief in FALLING AWAY FROM the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). Again, "But the Spirit saith expressly that in later times some shall FALL AWAY FROM the faith" (I Timothy 4:1). And again, "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are FALLEN AWAY FROM grace" (Galatians 5:4).

From the preceding passages one will note that the language "fall away from" is found in each of the three. One can fall away from "the living God." One can fall away from "grace." What in the world does such terminology mean if it

doesn't convey that one can apostatize into unfaithfulness? Inspired writers would have never employed such language unless it was indeed possible for a child of God to fall away from God. See how error, if believed and accepted, turns biblical language into nonsensical jargon?

Note also some general warnings to Christians within the Bible. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). And another, "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward" (II John 8). Why the admonition to "take heed" and "look to yourselves" lest one "fall" with the sad results of losing a "full reward" if no possibility of such may ever happen? For God to give the warning without there being any danger of such is silliness gone to seed. Such passages really need no comment or elaboration. What is needed is to read such passages with a good dose of common sense coupled with faith in God's word.

In days gone by the subject of "impossibility of apostasy" was the center of talk in debates our brethren had with sectarian preachers. These efforts were excellent evangelistic efforts to teach the lost within denominationalism the truth of the

gospel. Such efforts also reaffirmed to members of the church of Christ what we knew to be the truth in this matter. Today, however, our preaching brethren seemingly are not as familiar with the denominational arguments that we used to answer with ease. A final result is that way too many members of the church are ignorant when it comes to giving answers to their denominational friends on the subject. For example, mention the phrase "impossibility of apostasy" to some church members and see how many blank stares you receive. Would to God that our people could learn to "give answer" as God demands we do (I Peter 3:15).

Christ, his apostles, nor any other individual within the entire Bible ever taught the doctrine of "once saved, always saved." There is not one word in all the book of God to substantiate any such heresy. Such a doctrine never came from the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is straight from the devil and now perpetuated by his puppets within the circles of denominationalism and weak-kneed Christians. May the faithful continue to reject it for the error it is and expose it as opportunity allows.

November 18, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- When The Mormons Knock (Part I)
- High Ambitions
- The Challenge Of Modern Music #6
- Walking By Faith
- "Most Of A Minute"
- How Do You Say "Thank You" To God?
- What Is Your Position In The Ship Of Christ?

Volume 31 Number 47  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts 16:18

## Great Judgment Scenes

W.A. Holley

I, for one, often think of the forthcoming Judgment. I have no doubt that the Bible teaching concerning this great event of the future shall be just as it is described therein. For many years I have given my very best to help others and myself to be ready to stand before Almighty God. "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Hebrews 9:27, ASV). Again, "inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31, ASV).

Preparation for this great event is so important to our eternal welfare, we cannot afford to trifle with our souls (Matthew 10:28; 16:26). For your consideration, we present the following thoughts.

(1) When Jesus comes the greatest multitude ever gathered will there be assembled (II Corinthians

5:10; Hebrews 9:27; Romans 14:12). This multitude will include all who have ever lived, all now living, and all who shall ever live on the earth unto the end of the world -- all nations, tribes, tongues, kindreds, the good and the bad . . . AND YOU WILL BE THERE! The question is: Are you ready? Is your soul saved or lost? Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ? (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

(2) At the Great Judgment will be present the greatest Judge who ever rendered a decision. Jesus Christ will be that Judge. He will make no mistakes, nor will there be any miscarriage of justice. Jesus will judge those who stand before Him according to the deeds done in their bodies (II Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). At this time all forms of false and perverted religions will be forever destroyed -- atheism, humanism, astrology, materialism and evolutionism, and the like.

At the second coming of

Jesus "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 therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10, ASV). Revelation 21:3-5, tells us of the blissful happiness of the redeemed. The condemned are described in Revelation 21:8. The "second death" and "the lake of fire" refer to eternal punishment (Revelation 20:14; 21:8).

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). "Every transgression and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward" (Hebrews 2:1-4). Jesus is one Judge who cannot be corrupted!

(3) Those who gather at the Great Judgment shall be judged by the greatest book ever written, the Holy Bible. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have

spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Again we read, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were open: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:12). The books seem to stand for God's omniscience. He who knows everything and forgets nothing, unless He wills to forget (Hebrews 8:12).

All doctrines and commandments of men should be rolled up and burned (Acts 19:19; Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13). Human creeds, books of discipline and confessions of faith, cannot equal God's divine revelation to His people.

(4) The greatest separation the human family can ever experience will take place at The Great Judgment. For a preview of the judgment scene, we suggest Matthew 25:31-46, be closely scrutinized. Verse 46, reads, "And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting

punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

What will this great separation mean to countless millions? Note:

-God on one side and Satan on the other.

-Truth on one side and error on the other.

-The Bible on one side and human doctrines on the other.

-True religion on one side and false religion on the other.

But there will also be other separations. In some cases we will see:

-Father on one side and mother on the other.

-Brother on one side and sister on the other.

-Parents on one side and children on the other.

But all can stand together if all will believe and obey the truth (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21). Sincerely, we urge all to believe and obey the truth before it is too late (II Corinthians 6:1-2; Hebrews 3:13-19). Dear Readers: Truth is always the very best defense.

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

## "Is There Anything God Cannot Do?"

Mike Benson

I assume that your question is in reference to Job 42:2 which says, "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." In this passage Job is talking about

the great power of God. His power is matchless and unparalleled. However, you may be surprised to learn that there are some things that God cannot do. That is, He cannot do anything that is contrary to His nature or that

is inconsistent with His revealed will. Notice these examples:

1. God cannot lie. "In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:2). "God is not a man that

He should lie . . ." (Numbers 23:19). The prophet Samuel said, "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent" (I Samuel 15:29). "In order that by two unchangeable things,

in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18). ". . . let God be true but every  
Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## When The Mormons Knock (Part 1)

Glenn Colley

There are few or none among us who have never come in contact with the Mormon religion in some way. Their television commercials are well thought-out, and professionally produced. Their door-to-door work is perhaps only rivaled by another cultist group, the Jehovah Witnesses.

Have you ever wished you had an easy reference for meaningful discussion when they knock at your door? Hopefully this article, with it's suggestions, will help.

In the case that it has been some time since you considered the false doctrines of the Mormons, you may wish to answer their knock with, "Yes, I would like to study with you. How does next Thursday or Friday sound to you?" They won't mind making an appointment, and it will give you the time to prepare for the discussion.

In my experience, most Mormons know much more about the Book of Mormon than they do about the Bible. They do, however, claim to believe that BOTH are equally inspired of God, and that BOTH have validity for our lives. For that reason I often demonstrate to these youthful "elders" that both the Bible and the Book of Mormon cannot be inspired, for one contradicts the other. I start by saying, "We both believe that the Bible is inspired of God. I do not believe your Book of Mormon is inspired, for if it was, it wouldn't contradict the Bible. God doesn't make mistakes." They

will always agree at this point that there can't be contradictions in the books and both be inspired by God.

You should be familiar with verses which teach that the Bible is complete. For example,

1. The Holy Spirit guided the Apostles into ALL truth. (John 16:13) -- "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come."

(John 14:26) -- "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

2. It is a corrupt and damnable act to teach a gospel different from the one in the Bible.

(Galatians 1:8) -- "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

3. The faith was delivered with the Bible.

(Jude 3) -- ". . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (The word "once" here suggests "once and for all").

Now let us move to some occurrences of contradiction.

### 1. Where was Jesus born?

The Bible says Jesus was

born in Bethlehem. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, (Micah 5:2)." "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king . . . (Matthew 2:1)."

The Book of Mormon says Jesus was born in *Jerusalem*, a different town, a different place, several miles away. "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God, (Alma 7:10)."

2. At the death of Jesus, how long was darkness over the earth?

The Bible says three hours. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour, (Matthew 27:45)." "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour (Mark 15:33)."

The Book of Mormon says three *days*. "But behold, as I said unto you concerning another sign, a sign of his death, behold, in that day that he shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he

shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead (Helaman 14:21)." ". . . Yea, for the time that there should be darkness for the space of three days over the face of the land (III Nephi 8:3)."

3. When was the church of Christ established?

The Bible teaches that when Jesus was on the earth, His church was still yet to be built. "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, (Matthew 16:18)."

The Book of Mormon teaches that the church of Christ was established at 147 B.C., more than a century before Jesus came to earth! "And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church (Mosiah 18:17)."

4. When were disciples first called Christians?

The Bible says at Antioch: ". . . And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26)."

The Book of Mormon teaches they were called Christians as early as 72-73 B.C., before Jesus even came to the earth! "And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come, (Alma 46:15 See

also Alma 46:13, 16; 48:10)."

There is so much more which is easily uncovered when a lover of truth investigates the cult called Mormon. For example, when Joseph Smith first wrote the Book of Mormon in 1830, he considered it a great work. He later said, "I told the brethren that the book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth . . ." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 461). According to Joseph Smith's testimony there should not have been any reason to make changes in the Book of Mormon. He claimed that a voice spoke from heaven telling him that the translation of the Book of Mormon, as he had put it down, was correct. He said, "We heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, 'These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear the record of what you now see and hear.'" (*History of the Church*, by Joseph Smith, Vol. 1, pp. 54-55).

Since the time the book of Mormon was first published in 1830, there have been at least 3,913 changes made. In the original, the grammar is woefully incorrect. The grammar however, is not all that has been changed. In part two to come next week, I will show some of these revealing changes.

## High Ambitions

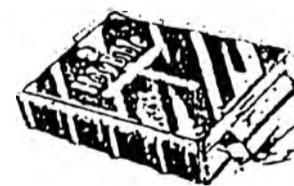
Allen Webster

Ask any child what he wants to be when he grows up and you are likely to receive an interesting answer. The little boy may want to play football for the Dallas Cowboys (or better yet, the Crimson Tide!). She may want to marry a rich man and live in a big house. Others may want to be missionaries, actors,

firemen, policemen, preachers, or Indian chiefs.

Most of us adjust our ambitions as we grow older to make them fit the changing situations of life. Ambition can be dangerous as it may lead to sin (Acts 8:18-24), strife (Matthew 20:20-28; James 4:1, 2), self-glory (Habbakuk 2:4, 5), and a Pharisaical spirit (Mark

12:38-40). Don't misunderstand, though, because Christians are to have ambition. Early Christians were taught to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (I Corinthians 12:31). Paul was ambitious toward spiritual growth (Philippians 3:12-14), and extending the Gospel (Romans 15:17-20).  
Continued On Page 4



### The Words Of Truth

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# The Challenge Of Modern Music #6

David W. Hester

What should be the response of both parents and children to the challenge of modern music? It should be varied and biblical, to be sure; but, it also must be sensible and sound. One must not be a reactionary; he must consider what effect his response would have upon teenagers and younger people.

Young people must apply biblical standards to everything they do and enjoy. When applied to modern music, it really helps them make wise decisions. Remember: the problem is not the **style** of the music. The problem is what the music is **saying**.

There are biblical passages which prohibit using God's name profanely, blaspheming holy things, or glorifying in evil (Ephesians 4:29). If music attacks Christianity and points to compromising

with false teaching, it must be avoided. Jimmy Buffet has a hit song, "Fruitcakes," in which he lumps Christianity in with all sorts of mystical Eastern religions. After giving Christianity a backhand slap, he encourages being "tolerant" of all religions. Mr. Buffet also cannot seem to record a song without cursing at least once.

Young people must not encourage those who are selling anti-Christian values through music (Philippians 4:8). When one gives his money to someone, he is approving what he has bought. If music is obviously unscriptural, it cannot have fellowship with Christians.

To be involved with music which is tasteless, uses God's name in evil ways, promotes drug and alcohol use, or glorifies immoral sex is to destroy the possibility of having a positive influence on

someone for the truth (James 2:12). It does not matter if the song is catchy; if it's wrong, it's wrong! Cheryl Crowe has a current hit, "All I Want To Do Is Have Some Fun." The song's music is unique and admittedly pleasant to the ear. But, the lyrics glorify beer drinking throughout as a means of "having some fun." Miss Crowe was a teacher; what she is teaching now is immoral.

But, what about parents? First, don't overreact by going out and burning your children's records without first discriminating between the good and the bad! That will do more harm than good. This writer well remembers when, in the course of presenting material like this at a congregation, a man from the community who was not a Christian said: "You know, we used to go out and burn it down," referring to places

which sell such music. The gentleman(?) had some other problems, as well.

Parents must be patient with their children on this. **Get involved with your child and his music, even if you don't like the style.** That is crucial. Help your child make musical choices that are positive. Do this in an open, communicative, supportive manner. Give guidance especially to pre-teens.

Talk about popular groups with your children. Listen to their likes and dislikes. Don't "shut them out" when they start talking about popular music. Above all, **be consistent!** Don't condemn their music and blindly defend your own. Acknowledge the wrong and condemn it.

Yes, modern music of all kinds poses a challenge to Christian parents and children. But, it is not

impossible to overcome. There are good performers and groups. There are good songs. One must be a discriminating listener, consistent in application and open to different styles of music.

Above all, the choices we make must be rooted and grounded in the truth of God's Word. If something is at odds with the Bible, it must be rejected.

As I said at the beginning of this series, I love good music of all kinds. There are many who think the same way. Playing and singing good, clean music is enjoyable and can serve as a good means of recreation and family time for many people. Enjoy the time you have with family and friends, but always place God's will above all.

## 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 succumbs 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. 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." In Romans 10:17 the same apostle says, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Then, in the matter of religion, if a thing cannot be found in God's word it is not a matter of faith. The conclusion is, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" Romans 14:23. The New Testament lays great emphasis upon the importance of putting first things first. Humanity has a long-standing habit of shoving these things in the background for things not nearly so important. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all 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.

God will not run second best

to any person or any thing. 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 Worship. When you are in our area we invite you to be with us at the Port St. Lucie Church of Christ here in Port St. Lucie. You will find a friendly welcome not only here, but wherever you go and

find Christians of the Lord's body. You will find people who are striving to rebuild the apostolic order of worship. You will marvel at the simplicity of doing only what the Lord commands. You will find upon investigation that it comports to what the New Testament teaches. Yes, 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).

--P.O. Box 978, Grand Bay, AL 36514.

### "Most Of A Minute"

Glenn Colley

Somewhere, buried deep within us all is a powerful force that makes us yearn to be accepted. And don't underestimate the strength of this "approval hunger." People in all cultures and at all economic levels will stop at almost nothing to receive the admiration of others. Want an example?

A company in California is now marketing the "cellular phone," which is, if you can swallow this, a fake car phone that they say looks real enough to fool people. No one would buy it, right? Wrong! About 40,000 have paid \$16 each for the dummy phone and stick-on car antenna. The company's motto is "It's not what you own, it's what people think you own."

Let's remember today to emphasize the right things in our lives and keep our desire for popularity at bay. And one more thing . . . let's remember that the Bible says in James 2:1 that it's a sin for us to treat people better or worse based on their financial status or any outward material attributes.

After all, it's not what people think you own, but what you ARE that counts.

### How Do You Say "Thank You" To God?

Most of us were taught the importance of saying "Thank You" when people did good things for us or said nice things to us. Remember the song for children about "two little magic words" that would "open any door with ease?" One of the words was "thanks" and the other little word was "please."

Some insensitive people or some ungrateful people may not think to say thanks. However, one characteristic of a noble character is the awareness of responding to goodness with an expression of appreciation.

But how does one say "thank you" to God? I can't call Him on the telephone and say, "thank you." I can't write Him a letter or send Him a thank you card. So how do I

get the message of my gratitude to a gracious God? There are basically two ways to thank God: thanksgiving and thanksgiving. These are complimentary.

The Bible is very plain in instructing God's people to give thanks in prayer. In Philippians an inspired apostle said, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests

be made known unto God" (4:6).

God created man "to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" because "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (I Timothy 4:3, 4).

How do people say "thank you" to God? They say "thank you" to God.

The Lord Jesus gave a good

example of saying "thank you" to God. Before Jesus ate food He first gave thanks (John 6:11). Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25).

So how do we say "thank you" to God? We say "thank you" in prayer and hymns of gratitude to God.

--Tom Holland

## "Is There Anything God Cannot Do?"

Continued From Page 1

man a liar . . ." (Romans 3:4). We have a God who tells us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

2. God cannot look upon

sin. "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness . . ." (Habakkuk 1:12). This does not mean that He does not see sin (Proverbs 15:3), rather He does not approve of, condone, or tolerate it. "For the eyes of the Lord are

over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:12). We have a God who is anxious to forgive sin! "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and

to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

3. God cannot be tempted with evil. James says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself

tempt anyone" (James 1:13). We have a God who is righteous and good! "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5).

## High Ambitions

Continued From Page 2

Christians are to "study to be quiet" (I Thessalonians 4:11). God wants to channel our ambitions. Here are some worthy ambitions for any follower of Christ.

**I WANT TO BE A DOORKEEPER.** An ambitious employee might desire to work his way up the corporate ladder to be CEO, or at least vice president. But what would the interviewer think of a prospective employee whose highest

ambition was to be doorkeeper?! It doesn't sound like much of an ambition, but it was worthy of a king: ". . . I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (David, Psalm 84:10). To just be a doorkeeper in heaven would be better than sitting on a throne in hell. A pretty good ambition, don't you think?

**I WANT TO LIVE IN A BARN.** Sure, most folks want to live in a mansion, but a

barn will satisfy me. But not just any barn. I want to live in God's barn! In the Parable of the Tares, Jesus pictures the end of the world as a harvest when weeds and wheat are separated. The tares (bearded darnel) will be bundled and burned (in hell). The wheat will be gathered "into my barn" (heaven, Matthew 13:30). How would you like to live in God's barn? A pretty good ambition, don't you think?

**I WANT TO BE POOR.**

The highest ambition of many people is to be rich, but I want to be poor! The reason is because Jesus said, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:3). The wise man wrote, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches" (Proverbs 13:7).

We might say, "Well, I qualify. I'm definitely poor." But Jesus didn't say. "Blessed

are the poor in purse . . ." No man is necessarily blessed because he is poor. Nor is any man necessarily cursed because he is rich. The Rich Man blundered out into the dark. Lazarus found a place in Abraham's bosom. But the Rich Man was not condemned simply because he was rich, any more than Lazarus was saved just because he was poor (Luke 16:19-31).

## What Is Your Position In The Ship Of Christ?

Don Williams

I have never been much of a boating enthusiast. I have tried windsurfing once, and have gone jet-skiing a couple of times. I have never sailed on a sailing boat, or anything larger. I do appreciate those who have the ability to sail.

I understand that every four years, America, along with other countries, race in a Yachting Cup Event. An America's Cup yacht team is made up of sixteen people, including the Navigator, the Helmsman, and the Mastman.

But the boat could not compete without the relentless work of the five "grinders," the men who turn the heavy cranks that control the sails. In a U.S.A. Today article, a grinder described his role in this way: "A grinder at the America's cup level is similar to a tight end in football. We need strength to provide the physical energy to power the boat around the race course. Essentially, our job is to turn the handles to raise and lower the sails and tack from one

side to another."

**WHAT PART DO YOU PLAY IN THE SHIP OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH?** We know that Jesus is the "Captain of our Salvation" (Hebrews 2:10). We realize that elders are to oversee the flock of God (Acts 20:28), thus, they might be seen as Navigators. Preachers must provide regular times of nourishment to the crew members, so that through the word they might not give up, or lose heart. Paul exhorted his fellow companions in

Acts 27, upon a literal voyage.

But what about you? Can you be considered a grinder? Do you keep the church going, by your daily prayers for her and her elders? Do you contribute generously, so that the work of the church might not suffer, even when you are away? Do you turn the handles for the church, doing whatever needs to be done, so that Christ and His church might be glorified?

Are you a helmsman, ever seeking for the church to go

in the right direction? Are you ever watchful of potential dangers, sounding forth the warning of possible treacherous waters ahead?

Whatever your position, there is room for all to be a regular part of the ship of Christ. When some do not work, it causes a harder strain on others to take up the slack. What are you doing for the precious ship of Christ, the Church?

--Rt. 3 Box 151-A, Killen, AL 35645.

November 25, 1994

## See Articles Inside:

- When The Mormons Knock (Part 2)
- "What Is Hell?"
- "I'm A Young Person, Can You Help Me?"
- Have You Ever Suffered For Jesus' Sake?
- "Most Of A Minute"
- How To Cope With Cares, Anxiety And Worry

Volume 30 Number 48  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words ( Truth

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

## Truth Or Tradition?

Dennis Gullledge

Tradition has the primary meaning of handing over to another; delivery, or transfer. This delivery includes the oral transmission of information or instruction, passed down from one generation to another. Webster says it is, "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (as a religious practice or a social custom.)"<sup>1</sup>

The word "tradition," as it is used in the Bible, carries with it the above meaning. It denotes the teachings of the Rabbis and their interpretations of the Law of Moses as handed down by them. For example, after the giving of the Law of Moses on Mt. Sinai the Jewish Rabbis deduced from the general principles of the Law what they considered to be their proper application. As the years passed other astute scholars felt that the interpretations of the earlier Rabbis needed additional enlightenment. On down the line others assumed the same liberty of explaining the explanations of the explanation. And so, by the time Christ came on the scene there was a stupendous mass of traditional material to which the Jews were answerable, much of it regarded with equal or greater authority than the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. This interpretative material is known as the Targums of the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. The Chaldean Targum on the book of Ruth has Naomi telling Ruth, "We are commanded to keep 613 precepts." F. F. Bruce, in a comment on this says, "The Rabbis calculated that the Law consisted of 613 precepts; 365

being negative (one for every day of the year), and 248 being positive (one for every part of the body)."<sup>2</sup> Is it any wonder, then, that Jesus said to the Pharisees that they made void the commandment of God by their traditions? (Mark 7:6-9).

A tradition is not wrong just because it is a tradition. A tradition is wrong when, and if, it is exalted to equal God's way. We are strongly controlled by some traditions that are not wrong in themselves. For example, as pertaining to our order of worship in churches of Christ, brethren, in places, are accustomed to a certain pattern of doing things. If you disturb that pattern you will certainly disturb some people. But, the Bible does not give any command from God as to the order of our worship services. We have commands from God as to *what* we are to engage in (prayer, singing, Lord's Supper, giving), but, no word as to the arrangement in which these things are to be engaged in. There are some among us who clamor for a change in these traditions. But, for some their clamor doesn't stop there.

There is another line of thought in which we need to pursue this matter of tradition. I notice, of late, that the words "tradition" and "traditional" are commonly used by the liberals among us to place a long-held belief or doctrine in an unfavorable light. For example, an elder in the Lord's church has within recent years written a book in which he challenges "the traditional view of hell," and sets out to defend annihilationism; the very doctrine espoused by Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>3</sup> Never

mind the fact that this view has been answered in debate for many years, and proven false and untenable, but the day has now dawned among churches of Christ, when false teachers among us can take advantage of an untaught generation and advocate any denominational dogma they please, and find it well accepted by many.

It seems that some of the "scholars" in our schools and the preachers in our prestigious pulpits are stepping out to challenge what they label as "traditional views" on subjects ranging from eternal punishment of the wicked to marriage-divorce and remarriage, to instrumental music in the worship, to women serving as deacons, to . . . you name it! The voices of concern in the current liberal movement are calling for us to give up our hidebound traditions in these and other areas.

Now, I am certainly not averse to re-studying a belief or an opinion, but what if a so-called "traditional view" happens to be the correct view. If a belief is labeled as a tradition, should that prejudice our minds? No doubt some would like to have it so. Perhaps that is why the word "tradition" is bandied about the way it is these days. It is now a scare word. The liberals throw it around and attach it to whatever they want, and in their minds it has the effect of the scarlet letter.

Please consider the following oft repeated claim: "The Bible does not say that instrumental music in Christian worship is wrong. It is the only Church of Christ tradition that says so." What's so wrong with that

statement? First, it fails to acknowledge the silence of the Scriptures in determining what God approves, or disapproves in Christian worship. A person will do one of two things with silence of the Scriptures: One, he will view it as allowing him to do anything that is not expressly condemned, as Martin Luther did, and the Christian Church still does, or, two, he will view it as limiting his actions to only that which the New Testament authorizes, either by express command, approved example, or necessary inference. Any person holding the first point of view will fail to see how a thing may be wrong even if there is no express condemnation in Scripture.

Second, it fails to recognize the law of exclusion in Biblical hermeneutics. That is, where the Bible includes a thing in keeping with God's will, it necessarily excludes anything that would incorporate something of another "kind" into the worship. For example, the Bible does not say we can't use Coca Cola and cornbread on the Lord's table. Why don't we do it? The reason is that the Bible includes what is to be on the Lord's table (unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine), [I Corinthians 11:23-29, Cf., Matthew 26:17-29] and that excludes anything else of another kind. Very simple. Yet, some will argue that we inconsistently use songbooks in our singing to which "our tradition" finds no objection. The reason is elementary: with song books you still sing as God commanded, and nothing else. With instrumental accompaniment you interject another "kind" of music (mechanical)

into the worship aside from the only kind for which we have Scriptural authorization (vocal).

Third, it carelessly gives consent to the worn out expression "Church of Christ tradition," and confuses a matter of truth with custom. We need to be very careful of what we stick that "T" word label on.

Tradition is not necessarily bad. That which is handed down may be bad, and contrary to God's will, or it may be good, and worthy of perpetuation. A tradition as such may be neither good nor bad, such as the "two songs and a prayer" custom. But, if we "transgress the commandment of God" by our traditions, then it deserves an immediate rejection without a moment's deliberation (Cf. Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:8). The eternal truth of God is that which the apostles received of God, and through inspired writings have handed down to us. Paul said, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thessalonians 2:15). It's an easy thing to scoff at truth and call it tradition. Let us not be misled by those who do so.

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1989), s.v. "Tradition."

<sup>2</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Books And The Parchments* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>Edward William Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical And Historical Study Of Final Punishment* (Houston, TX: Providential Press, 1982).

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

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## When The Mormons Knock (Part 2)

Glenn Colley

These two articles are written with those readers in mind who want to be able to study more intelligently with Mormons when they knock at the door. Obviously to do that, a knowledge of the Mormon religion is very helpful.

The Book of Mormon was written by Joseph Smith in 1830. He claimed that on the night of September 21, 1823, while praying, a light appeared which got increasingly bright. When the room was thus "lighter than at noonday," a floating person appeared. The being wore a loose robe "of most exquisite whiteness." The angel, whose name was Moroni, told Joseph God had a great work for him to do, and that Joseph Smith's name "should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people."

The angel told of a book written on gold plates, containing, among other things, "the fullness of the everlasting Gospel . . .". He told Joseph that when he got the plates that he must not show them to anyone except those of whom he would be told, under

penalty of death. Those who allegedly saw the golden plates are listed in the front of the Book of Mormon with their testimony. Concluding one of these testimonies are these words: "And we lie not, God bearing witness of it."

Joseph Smith was so proud of the finished product that he said of Book of Mormon, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on the earth." (History of the Church, Vol. 4, p. 461). He said on page 54 of that same history, "These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear."

Now, if the book is the most correct book in the world, inspired of God, and not only revealed but also translated by God's power, then you **CERTAINLY** wouldn't want to change any part of it, would you?

As a matter of fact, since 1830, there have been at least 3913 changes made in the Book of Mormon by the Mormon leaders. Some of these changes are spelling,

some grammar, and some doctrinal. It is however important to note, that a book translated by God's power shouldn't even have an incorrect usage of the language. Did God not have the power to use our language to say what He meant?

To say that Joseph Smith was unlearned in English grammar is a colossal understatement. For one thing, he couldn't remember when it was correct to use the word "was" and when he should use the word "were." For example, "And also of Adam and Eve, which **WAS** our first parents . . ." (page 15). ". . . and loosed the bands which **WAS** upon my wrists . . ." (page 49). "But it all **WERE** vain . . ." (page 142). "Behold I **WERE** about to write them all . . ." (page 506). He had a similar problem with using "is" instead of "are" ". . . according to his judgments, which **IS** just . . ." (page 150), and enjoyed using the word "A," "And as I was **A** going thither . . ." (page 249).

Grammar isn't the only problem the Mormons soon wanted to fix in their "God-given" Book of Mormon. There were word usages that gave them problems. On page 260 of the first

edition the following statement appears: "Behold, the Scriptures are before you; if ye will **ARREST** them, it shall be to your own destruction." In the 1964 reprint, page 229, verse 20, this has been changed to read: "Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will **WREST** them it shall be to your own destruction."

In the first edition, on page 87, this statement appears: ". . . the mean man boweth down . . .". In the 1964 edition page 74 verse 9, this has been changed to read: ". . . the mean man boweth **NOT** down . . .".

In the first edition, on page 328, the following appears: ". . . yea, and that ye preserve these **DIRECTORS** . . . And now my son, these **DIRECTORS** were prepared, that the world of God might be fulfilled . . ." However, in the 1964 edition, page 290, verse 21 and 24, we find these words: ". . . yea, and that ye preserve these **INTERPRETERS** . . . And now my son, these **INTERPRETERS** were prepared that the word of God might be fulfilled . . ." (A "director" was a ball which was used as a compass. That is, the Lord

was supposed to make a spindle in the ball point in the direction the people should go. An interpreter on the other hand, is one who interprets languages).

My source for these facts is from a book by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, who have photo-copied the original 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, and marked every change made over the years. The book can be ordered from Utah Lighthouse, P.O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.

So much more could be noted here. This much is written to offer courage to those who are hesitant to study with the Mormons when they knock. Plead with them to go back to the Bible as their only guide. Show them that they have followed false prophets that are wolves in sheeps clothing. Do what you can to bring them away from the Mormon cult and into Christ before it is too late.

II Timothy 3:16 -- "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."

## "What Is Hell?"

Mike Benson

Mr. Benson,

"What do the scriptures teach about hell?"

While hell is not a pleasant subject to contemplate, it is a part of biblical teaching. A study of this matter ought to serve as ample motivation to righteous living. Jesus warns, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both

soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:27).

1. Hell is a prepared place. Jesus said, "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Matthew 25:41).

2. Hell is a permanent place. Daniel wrote, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to

shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (II Thessalonians 1:9). "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; Continued On Page 4



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# "I'm A Young Person, Can You Help Me?"

**Allen Webster**

"I am at a difficult time in my life. You see, I struggle to be independent without being rebellious. I want to do the right thing, but it is not always clear what that is. I long to be a good example to my friends, but I also want to fit in with my peers. I enjoy Christianity, but the world's pull is strong."

**As A Young Person**

**I Need For You To . . .**

"ENCOURAGE ME." You may not remember what it was like to be a teenager, but it is a discouraging time. Teenagers are very hard on themselves. When I make a mistake, I tend to make too much out of it. What I need is for the adults whom I respect to speak words of cheer and give me a pat on the back for the things I do well. I need to know that all people make

mistakes.

"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 40:30-31). Paul wrote, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21).

"TEACH ME." Yes, even though I sometimes act like I know everything, I realize that I am still learning! The greatest need I have is to learn the Bible. The basic truths which you have known for years, I still do not know. I want to know when I will be old enough to be baptized. I long to know what Christ wants me to do with my life.

How does He expect me to act? What is right and what is wrong?

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:9-11). Solomon wrote the Proverbs, in part, to give "young men knowledge and discretion" (1:4).

"SHOW ME." I appreciate your instructions, but I find it easier to follow your example. Your life is a better teacher than your lips. What I really want are role models. When I *see* adults adorning the Gospel of Christ, it is easier to understand what the precepts mean. When I see the importance you place on

worshipping God and studying His word, it motivates me to be interested. When you sacrifice to live right, it does not bother me so much when you ask me to sacrifice.

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26). Jesus faced a young man who asked, "What lack I yet?" to which He responded, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:20-21). Jesus taught the lesson on priorities and exemplified how it applied.

"CORRECT ME." You did not expect to see this one, did you!? I act as if discipline were the curse of my life, but it is important to me. It shows

that you care about me. I need boundaries set. I must know the difference between right and wrong, truth and error, good and bad. I will test you here. I am curious and want to know what lies outside the boundaries you have set for me. If you remain steadfast in your restrictions, then I will understand your conviction and see it as love for me.

The Proverbs say, "Withhold not correction from the child . . ." (23:13); "Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (22:15); "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (13:24).

Thank you for blessing my life and helping me through this difficult time.

## Have You Ever Suffered For Jesus' Sake?

**Elwood Holt**

I am wondering if sorrow has entered the home of some who are reading this? If so, you do not stand alone. If death came only to our households we could charge God with being unfair. But it is no respecter of persons. It strikes the men of both high and low degree.

Have you ever stopped to think of the spiritual condition of our world today? Though we are making some progress in the right direction, we are crippled by unfaithfulness and spiritual laziness on all hands. Unconcern seems to be typical of the average person. "I just don't have time," is the pet excuse of the twentieth century. Do you suppose a good strong persecution would snap us out of our lethargy? Someone said, "Persecutions are beneficial to the righteous. They are a hail of precious stones." Another said, "The blood of

martyrs is the seed of the kingdom." Satan's biggest mistake is always made when he goes all out to persecute God's people. He is cutting his own throat, but it seems that he has to learn his lesson all over again ever so often.

Persecution brings people together, fortifies them, and promotes unity. In unity there is strength. The greatness in many is never seen until the waters are troubled. Sure, men have come through the furnace of adversity. Some men are never appreciated for their strength until they are called upon to manifest it.

The Church of the Lord did not come to us on a silver platter. The disciples who tried to walk in the steps of Jesus as he led them throughout the Bible land, did not have things easy. They did not have the luxuries of life that we have. They had no homes of their own. They roved about, slept under the heavens with the clouds as

their comforts. They were the constant object of the persecution of the blasphemers of their day. The Church of Jerusalem got off to a big beginning on the day of Pentecost. Thousands of souls were added by obedience to the Lord. But the Jerusalem church became complacent. The members got lazy. They lost what vision they had. When vision perishes, the people perish too. We will never rise any higher than our personal vision. Let us remember this and never succumb to the spirit of defeatism. With the Lord helping, we can do all things for His cause. No, the disciples did not have things easy. They suffered as their master told them they would do. He suffered and finally a bunch of ugly, vicious men put him to a shameful death. He arose the third day and went back to heaven. But, His worthy apostles had to face

an unfriendly world for a number of years before they could go on to be with him whom they had learned to love above all life. How did they die? Tradition says they died in these manners:

Matthew, slain with a sword in Ethiopia. Mark, dragged through the streets of

Alexandria, Egypt, 'till he expired. Luke, hanged on an olive tree in Greece; John, put in boiling oil in Rome, but escaped death to die naturally at Ephesus, Asia. James, the great, was beheaded at Rome. James, the less, thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, Continued On Page 4

### "Most Of A Minute"

**Glenn Colley**

**No matter how many ways the feminist movement may try to make a woman like a man, the fact is that the Bible teaches we are different. That's what our Creator intended when He made us. I think, however, that a point needs to be made regarding things like sexual harrassment and verbal abuse.**

**While the Bible clearly teaches that women are to be subject to their husbands (Ephesians 5), it doesn't ever condone the abuse of women. In fact, it teaches the opposite. Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies, and as Christ loved His church and died for it. Women, as well as men, are to be treated with the enduring respect found in Matthew 7:12 where Jesus said, "What you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them. . . ." And, our speech is always to be, as Colossians 4:8 puts it, "seasoned with salt" or with proper discretion.**

**The fact that men are different from women will never justify the abuse of anyone.**

## "What Is Hell?"

Continued From Page 2  
and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:11). See also Matthew 18:8; Mark

9:45-46.  
3. Hell is a place of punishment. John revealed, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all

liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the

wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:49-50). "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There

will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). See also Romans 2:5-11; Hebrews 10:29; II Peter 2:9.

## Have You Ever Suffered For Jesus' Sake?

Continued From Page 3  
then beaten to death with a club. Phillip hanged up against a pillar in Phrygia. Andrew, bound to a cross where he preached until he expired. Thomas was run through the body with a lance. Bartholomew, flayed alive; Jude, shot to death with

arrows, Matthias, stoned, then beheaded. Simon, crucified in Persia, and Paul, the last and one "chosen out of due season" beheaded out of Rome.

And then we think we have suffered for Jesus' sake: Oh, we should rise above excuses! Pitiful, frail

creatures making excuses for neglect of God's will! We should pray, "DEAL MERCIFULLY WITH OUR UNBELIEF, O LORD!"

These words should make the church mean more to us than it did when we began. How great our faith should be -- we who are so abundantly

blessed. We should never forsake the Lord's house. And, remember, most of the work of this world is done by people who don't "FEEL WELL!" Jesus said, "YE SHALL SEEK ME, AND SHALL NOT FIND ME: AND WHERE I AM, THITHER YE CANNOT

COME" John 7:34. Jesus also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, IF A MAN KEEP MY SAYINGS, HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH" John 8:51. It pays to study the Holy Book.

## How To Cope With Cares, Anxiety And Worry

W. A. Holley

These words deal with what doctors refer to as "a troubled or engrossed state of mind or the causes of these mental problems." Hence, emotional and psychological problems have existed at least from Bible times.

We shall cite certain passages which read: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow shall be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the death is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34, ASV). "... Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you" (I Peter 5:7, ASV). Again, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6, ASV).

Thus, Paul, Peter, Jesus and many others have recognized that so-called nervous and mental sicknesses really exists. We shall mention a few of these that we may identify them: guilt feelings, resentment (an unforgiving spirit), fear or phobias, anxiety, frustration, indecision, doubt, jealousy, selfishness and the lack of self-esteem.

We should learn that worry and anxiety never passed an examination, added a cubit to one's stature, made one happy, never earned a dollar or paid a bill. Someone said, "To worry about what we can't help is useless; to worry about what we can help is stupid." We

should learn that God still rules in the affairs of men: put your faith and trust in Him and He will bring you through all the uncertain steps of life.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

A) Refuse to permit minor problems to upset you. To miss a telephone call is not worth getting up tight about. To be late for an appointment is of little consequence. There is such a thing as taking life as it is. Read Matthew 5:33-42.

B) Try to find a way to get along with yourself. Most of us tend to think that it is the other person's fault. Adam claimed that Eve was at fault, not he, himself. In each family, congregation, or office, we find those who think that others are out of step with them. Read Matthew 7:1-5.

C) Learn to enjoy the small pleasures of life. Not many of us can ever live in a mansion, or wear the most expensive clothes, or eat the most exotic foods. Good health, good friends, and a good night's sleep are worth far more than unattainable luxuries concerning which we may dream. Jesus talked about the lilies of the field (Matthew 6:25-32). We need to pause to hear the sounds of the morning and the music that comes from the rustling of the leaves. Develop a feeling of appreciation for all gestures of kindness extended to you. Never purchase clothes, or cars, or houses just to be shown to your neighbors. One man paid \$500 dollars for a

leather coat just to tell others how much he had paid for it. Such a person is a prey to feelings of insecurity.

D) When one comes to the place where he worries about his worries, he is in real trouble. Refocus your life. Set your mind on God, the Bible, the Lord's church and your fellowman. Make a sincere effort to do a good deed for a neighbor or friend each day (Matthew 7:12). Never "pass by on the other side" as the priest and the Levite did (Luke 10:23-37).

E) Have you given up fighting the battles of life? Does almost everything get on your nerves? Have you become irritable toward everyone? The little word DO is a very important word in your Bible. Jesus came to DO the will of the Father (John 6:38). We must DO the will of God (Matthew 7:21-23). Never, never, never give up; keep on keeping on until the last breath. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13, ASV). Here we have the language of success. "I can't always ends in failure." Being mature will help; be tough.

F) Learn to trust other people; put the best construction possible on others. Do not think that everyone is a crook. To be eternally suspicious and mistrustful of everyone is a great detriment for anyone to bear. Of course, there are many lawless people in our world, but all are not out to "get" you.

We must, somehow, learn to forgive those who may have sinned against us and move on with our lives (Matthew 6:12-15; Ephesians 4:31-32). Be assured that God have His way of causing all things to work together for our good (Romans 8:28).

G) We herewith offer some practical suggestions: 1) Instead of sullenness bring your problems out into the open and talk about them. How can we ever solve our problems if we never talk about them? This is why your Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Get away from your troubles once in a while. Take a walk, or ride down the road going nowhere especially. This writer has followed this procedure for many years. But we must be prepared to return and deal with our difficulty. We can return composed and better prepared to meet our problems emotionally.

When you are angry work it off. Instead of tantrums, "count to ten first," before you fly off the handle. Temper can be controlled (Ephesians 4:26-27; Psalm 37:8). Be calm and restrained today and make your reply tomorrow. Such will save many heartaches.

You are not always right in your words and deeds. Why not admit it? It is to our ad-

vantage to give in once in a while. Jesus taught His disciples to "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-42). When you are right don't be so mean spirited about it. Remember, it is sometimes not so much what you say but how you say it. Who can stand a person who is never wrong?

Never try to settle all your problems at once. Set up some priorities. "First things first." Some folk major in minors. We live one day at a time. Learn to separate the wheat from the chaff. Make yourself available for wholesome activities. Work with others for the betterment of all members of the family and the church.

"Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For, He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: And let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil" (I Peter 3:8-12, ASV).

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

December 2, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Things Which Happen Gradually
- Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light
- When Visiting The Church Of Christ
- What Can We Do?
- Position Open
- What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

Volume 30 Number 49  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but I speak the words of truth and soberness." --

the

## "Lovest Thou Me?" (No.

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

In John 21:15-17 we read, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep."

This is one of the post-resurrection appearances of our Lord of which there were nearly a dozen. This one occurred on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Though others were present, some six, it

concerned initially the Lord and Simon Peter. By implication it concerned the other six and all of us today. In this interesting conversation Jesus asked a question three times. It consists of three words -- "Lovest thou me?" Its very repetition underscores its tremendous importance. Together, let us meditate, in this and some four installments to follow, on some of the characteristics of this vital and fundamental query. Some twelve to fifteen will be given in all. They will be numbered consecutively and noted with some brevity.

### (1) IT IS A DISTINGUISHING QUESTION

It touches love. Love has always been the distinguishing badge or token of discipleship to the Lord. During the final week the Lord gave three laws or directives relative to love. In

Matthew 22:36-40 He listed supremacy of love for God as the chiefest of all commands. The second of all commandments is like unto it which demands that one love his neighbor as he does himself. In the Upper Room discourse on Thursday prior to His crucifixion Jesus gave His disciples the new commandment of love (John 13:34, 35). It called for them to love one another as Christ loved His own disciples. This was the highest dimension of love the world has ever known. Minus love all else is void of profit (I Corinthians 13:1-3). In the great love chapter we have the character, conduct and continuation of love exhibited so eloquently and so excellently (I Corinthians 13:1-13). Love is greater than faith and hope and abides forever (I Corinthians 13:13). Love is the bond of perfectness (Colossians 3:14).

Fervent love covers a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8). Love never fails (I Corinthians 13:8). Love is the climax of the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-7). God is love as the apostle of love attractively affirms in the twin declarations of I John 4:8, 16. When we truly love we exhibit our kinship to God. Love distinguishes between the believer and the non-believer; between the fervent Christian and the lukewarm church member; between the one who loves God loyally and the one who is spasmodic in his service. Truly love is the distinguishing badge or token of real discipleship in the Lord's service.

### (2) IT IS A REMARKABLE QUESTION

It is remarkable from the standpoint of the one who asked it -- the Lord of glory. It is remarkable from the

standpoint of the one to whom it was directed -- one of the foremost apostles. It is remarkable due to its great brevity. It is remarkable because it goes to the very heart of what discipleship to Jesus really consists. It is remarkable because of its repetition. It is remarkable because of the time it was asked -- subsequent to the Lord's resurrection, after Peter's denial of the Lord thrice and just prior to the time He returned to the Palace of the Universe on holy high. It is remarkable in that John, of the four gospel biographers of our Lord's life, is the only one of the quartet to include it. It is remarkable because of its preservation and that we can have ardent access to it today.

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

## Psalm 119

**Mel Futrell**

Many Christians, no doubt, have received considerable comfort, enjoyment, and instruction from reading the 150 psalms we have as the book of Psalms. Psalms 1, 6, 19, 23, 90, 117, 119, and 148 have been special favorites of mine now for many years. I expect that you also have some favorites of your own. Our Lord recognized the Psalms as one part of the

three-fold division of the Old Testament with this statement, ". . . all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the PSALMS, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). Also in Paul's time the psalms had apparently already been divided into chapters as is indicated in Acts 13:3, ". . . as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this

day have I begotten thee."

The longest of the Psalms and the real focus of this article is Psalm 119. This psalm of 176 verses is rather unique. It is composed of, "22 eight-verse sections. Each section begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each verse within the section begins with the same letter" (Eerdmans' Concise Bible Handbook, Poetry and

Wisdom Literature, 1980, p. 178).

With such a de-emphasis today on the written word, in and out of the church, it is refreshing to re-read and study again the 119th Psalm. A recent advertisement from our local paper by a denominational group illustrates this well. It was said, "We reject the idea that a book or institution is superior to the conscience of

a morally responsible human being. Thomas Jefferson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Florence Nightingale endorsed our principles. Why don't you give us a try?" Brethren, these people reject the inspiration and thus absolute authority of the Scriptures, yet they appeal to mere men as a drawing card to have others visit their group. Get this. The title of Continued On Page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Things Which Happen Gradually

Glenn Colley

While it is true that life is "a vapor" (James 4:14), meaning that it passes quickly, it is also true that a great number of matters happen so gradually in our lives that they go unnoticed.

Our children grow so fast. But you only notice that rapid growth when you stop and ponder how they looked a year or two ago, or look at an old photo, or you return from a long trip having not seen them for several weeks. At those times you are shocked at how they've changed. I am glad that most of the time their growth is so gradual that I am able to push aside the thoughts of that not-so-far-away graduation or marriage. God made their growth gradual.

The aging of our parents, in a similar way, is gradual. If we live near them and see them often we are seldom surprised by the new wrinkles or furrows in their brow. The changes come so gradually that we hardly notice them -- until we look at an old photo. Those who live long distances from their aging parents face a somewhat unhappy reality every time they make the trip to see their folks. Those weeks or months between visits have all made their mark in the aging process.

I am glad it happens gradually. Some things in life would be so painful if they happened all at once.

There are other considerations in life regarding gradual change. Spiritual changes, whether good or bad, often happen so gradually as to go unnoticed too. Stop and think. What is your relation to God and to His word now as compared with 5 or 10 years ago?

The ideal of spiritual and physical change is found in Paul's writing:

"For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory . . ." (II Corinthians 4:16, 17).

That's how we should be. How do you respond to the gradual but certain changes in your body as you age? Is there a fountain of youth to make this process less a tragedy? Is there a secret in life that will melt away the unhappiness of growing old? YES! The secret is simply that while you gradually decline and become older physically, as a Christian you continually study to grow spiritually. While one is decreasing, the other is increasing. That's what Paul meant when he contrasted the outward man that is perishing, and the inward man that is constantly new and growing. Is that gradual? Yes, but relax. When you

live this way God is in control and things will work out His way.

Obviously there are other gradual changes in some folks spiritual lives which are sad. I suppose all Christians can tell of someone near to them who has gradually drifted off the old paths of faithfulness. The Psalmist evidently pondered this idea when he penned, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2).

This shows a gradual progression, or perhaps you'd say, digression. Some among us have left to follow liberal, denominational agendas. We grieve over their loss. What happened? They simply listened to the counsel of the ungodly and gradually drifted away from the right.

Take a moment to consider where you are and where you are going spiritually. Something is gradually happening to you because you are letting or making it happen. Do you like the direction? It may be time to make serious changes to get back on the right track.

Life, you see, passes quickly and happens gradually.

# Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light

B. J. Clarke

Have you ever considered what it would be like to be completely blind? Can you imagine living in total darkness? It is unfortunate that many in our world are afflicted with this impairment. They have never seen the beautiful sunrise and sunset. They have never witnessed the colors of God's creation: the bright red cardinal, green meadows, deep blue skies, bright yellow sunshine, rainbows, autumn leaves, etc. . . . They have never beheld the rolling hills and majestic mountains that adorn God's splendid creation. They have never shared in the warmth of a human smile, an expressive gleam in one's eyes or the beauty of a wedding bride. How blessed we are to have our sight! Our gratitude should be expressed to God daily!

On at least five specific occasions in the New Testament, our Lord Jesus healed the physically blind and called them out of a world of darkness into a marvelous world of light (Matthew 9:27-31, 12:22, 20:29-34, Mark 8:22f, John 9:1-41). Can you imagine being in a state of total darkness and suddenly having your eyes opened to a flood of light? What immense joy those whom Jesus healed must have felt! We pray that

all who are bound in a world of darkness might someday be loosed from this bondage to enjoy the world of light. Physical blindness is indeed a tragedy.

Although difficult to imagine, the Bible speaks of a type of blindness far more tragic than physical blindness. It is spiritual blindness. Paul said that Satan had blinded the minds of the lost so that the glorious light of the gospel would not shine through unto them (II Corinthians 4:4). Peter said that Christians who lacked the "Christian graces" were blind (II Peter 1:9). John said that he who hates his brother is in darkness that hath blinded his eyes (I John 2:11). God's word often depicts those in spiritual darkness as stumbling and groping for direction (Proverbs 4:19, Jeremiah 23:12, Isaiah 59:10, John 11:10, 12:35f). At one time or another all of us have been spiritually blinded and living in darkness. Those who are in darkness need a source of light. The Scriptures reveal at least three sources of light available to us in this dark world.

(1) GOD IS LIGHT - Several scriptures attest to this fact. David said, "For thou art my lamp, O Lord and the Lord will lighten my darkness" (II Samuel 22:29) Continued On Page 4



## The Words Of Truth

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# When Visiting The Church Of Christ

W. A. Holley

Have you ever visited the Church of Christ? Do you sometimes hear strange things concerning this particular church? Are these strange reports true?

If you were to visit the services of the Church of Christ, what would you learn about those who worship there? Is the Church of Christ composed of people who are religious fanatics and cranks and bigots? We believe that you will be pleasantly surprised when you discover that members of the Church of Christ are just plain, everyday, God-fearing people, as are others.

But when you visit the Church of Christ, what should you expect to find? We offer the following suggestions to our honest and sincere readers.

(1) You will find a group of people who believe that God is real, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, and that He revealed the inspired word of God through inspired men (Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1-2; II Timothy 3:15-17; I Peter 1:20-21).

(2) You will find a cluster of people who accept the Bible as God's revelation to man. They "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV). Hence, the Church of Christ rejects all human creeds and dogmas. Members of the Church of Christ accept the Holy Scriptures as authoritative in matters of religion without reservation, emendation or substitution (Revelation 22:18-19). Her members recognize the high authority of Christ in all areas of life (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17).

(3) You will find people who are members of the First Century church, as established by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:36-38, 47). How can this be, you may ask? Well, we have the same seed (Luke 8:11; the same soil (the human heart), and since seed always brings forth fruit after its own kind (Genesis 1:11-12; Galatians 6:7-8), we have the apostolic church reproduced. For example, if we wish to grow a special watermelon that grows here in Alabama, we need not

grow a vine reaching all the way to California. What we need is to plant the Alabama seed in California soil and the Alabama melon will be grown in California. Now you see!

(4) You will find honest and sincere people whose worship appeals to the heart, the inner man, rather than to man's fleshly nature. Christians worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Worship need not be jazzed up, marked by foot stomping, clapping of hands, and uncontrolled emotions.

These are the items of Scriptural worship: Prayer, singing, Bible study, giving, and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; Ephesians 5:19; I Corinthians 11:23-34; I Corinthians 16:1-2; James 5:16). It is just as sinful to leave off the Lord's supper, as many denominational churches do, as it would be to eliminate giving. As far as the Lord is concerned, it is all or nothing (James 2:10; 4:17).

(5) You would find a group of people who have obeyed the gospel of Christ. They have believed, repented, confessed, and have been baptized into Christ for

remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 4:17).

(5) You would find a group of people who have obeyed the gospel of Christ. They have believed, repented, confessed, and have been baptized into Christ for remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 4:17).

Hence, they are members of the Lord's church, not because they have joined it, but because they have been added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). These people have gone all the way back to the church that began on the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection -- the original Apostolic church.

(6) When visiting the Church of Christ, you will find that the members of the Church of Christ are not cranks, eccentrics, and fanatics. While they are not perfect, they sincerely try to live a warm, friendly, wholesome Christian life, for the most part, they are considerate, kind, courteous, respectable, and genuinely interested in the welfare of

others, even to spreading the truth of the gospel worldwide (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

If you should find some members who are otherwise it is not because we want them that way; rather, we are seeking to help them improve their lives (Titus 2:11-12; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 5:16).

When visiting the Church of Christ, we would not desire to force you to become a member, but we would like to urge you to investigate it, and if you find it to be Scriptural, you may then wish to become a member of Christ's church (Acts 17:11; Matthew 16:18-19; Romans 16:16).

Hence, the Church of Christ is right, if all other churches are right, but the Church of Christ is still right, even if other churches are wrong! We make the foregoing statement because we follow the Scriptures without subtraction, or addition, or substitution. What could be better?

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

## What Can We Do?

Mike Benson

Dear Mike,

"What can we as Christians do about the sale of pornography in our community?"

I appreciate your question. This is an issue which should concern all citizens.

1. RESPOND: The following is a copy of the *Dear Manager Card* made available by the American Family Association which you can print on one side of an index card:

Dear Manager,

I noticed that you sell pornographic magazines. I believe that pornography is harmful to our community and does not belong in the family marketplace. I respectfully request that you

stop offering these materials. Should you continue to sell these materials I cannot in good conscience patronize your store, and must encourage my friends, acquaintances, fellow church members and others not to shop here. Should you decide to remove the pornographic material, please call me at the number listed below. I will at that time resume shopping in your store and will encourage my friends to do the same.

Signed

Phone Number

2. INFORM.

"A study of habitual sex-offenders at a penitentiary noted that 38% of the rapists used 'soft-core' porn to arouse and incite themselves before the rape while another 19%

used 'hard-core' porn immediately prior to committing the offense. . . "1

"A study by the Michigan state police department showed that 41% of the 38,000 sexual assault cases on file involved some use of porn immediately prior to or during the act. . . "2

"One in four females will be sexually molested in her lifetime."3

•According to Canadian researcher James Check, "Exposure to non-violent pornography influences the acceptance and carrying out of the rape myth when a woman says no she really means yes, and that ultimately she not only will concede to, but also will

enjoy sexual advances made against her will."4

•Victor Cline, a psychologist at the University of Utah, says that the rape rate in the United States has increased

by more than 700% since 1933. He says that pornography has been found by many studies to have a direct relationship to these  
Continued On Page 4

### Position Open

**Following the recent resignation of Joe Spivey from our work at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, we are currently seeking a man to fill our Associate Ministers (Youth/Education) position. Resumes are now being accepted for consideration. They should be mailed to:**

**Attn: Elders**

**Sixth Avenue Church of Christ**

**1501 Sixth Avenue**

**Jasper, AL 35501**

# Psalm 119

Continued From Page 1

this brief recruitment plea is, "Are You Looking For A Church That Doesn't Tell You What To Think?" My point is this, brethren, the 119 Psalm places great emphasis on the Word. This is David's psalm in praise to God for his Word. In fact, only five of the 176 verses don't mention God's Word in any form; only five. (see verses 84, 90, 121, 122, 132) This emphasis on the

Word of God is demonstrated by the use of ten different English words or phrases in the KJV to describe God's revelation (Note: law, testimonies, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word, ordinances, word of truth). Surely, this evidences to all the great importance attached to God's revelation of his will to man.

Throughout the psalm we are impressed with the

contrast between those who are righteous and those who are wicked in relationship to God's word. The examples of such are too numerous to include all here but perhaps a sampling will suffice. The righteous walk in it, keep it, respect it, learn it, desire to be taught by it, meditate upon it, love it, observe it, long for it, are not ashamed of it, will not forget it, are comforted by it, delight in it. They are

strengthened by it, are directed by it, pray they will not wander from it, speak it, take heed to it, are cleansed by it, stick to it, understand it, etc. The wicked err from it, forsake it, fail to keep it, have forgotten it, are far from it, don't seek it, and by implication, the wicked do the very opposite of what is listed that the righteous do.

Psalm 119 is truly poetry with deep insight. Unlike

much of the world we do not reject the Book, the Word of God. But rather we accept it for what it is, God-breathed Scripture. We cling to it realizing that the hope laid up for us in Heaven can only be found in the Word of Truth, the Gospel (Colossians 1:5).

--904 Randall Ave., P.O. 38, Daphne, AL 36526-(0)38.

## Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light

Continued From Page 2

David restated this idea in several of his psalms (Psalm 18:28, 27:1, 36:9, 118:27). The beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus stated the idea quite clearly when he wrote, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5b). The Greek language in this passage is quite dogmatic. John uses two negatives to signify that not even one tiny particle, not one speck or spot of darkness can be found in the pure light which flows from the character of God. The sum total of God's divine character is seen in the word "light." Christians have been called out of darkness to walk in his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Once we come into

fellowship with God we can no longer walk in darkness (I John 1:6). To maintain our fellowship with God we must continue to walk in the light (I John 1:7f).

(2) JESUS IS LIGHT - The same John who wrote that God the Father is light, affirmed the same thing about God the Son. In the first chapter of his gospel he noted that John the Baptizer bore witness of the light, that all men through him might believe (John 1:5-9). Later in this same book, Jesus proclaimed that he is the light of whom John wrote. "*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*" (John 8:12).

A short time later he stated, "*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world*" (John 9:5). Jesus came into this world to provide a source of light to those who were groping in spiritual darkness. Those who would accept the light and follow it's guidance would be delivered out of darkness into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13, I Peter 2:9).

(3) THE WORDS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE LIGHT - "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:8b). "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). "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:" (Proverbs 6:23). These passages plainly show that the words of the Holy Spirit, recorded infallibly by holy men of God, provide guidance and light to the sinner lost in darkness and to the child of God wishing to maintain fellowship with God. This is precisely why Satan, the god of this world, works so hard to blind the minds of unbelievers. Paul said that Satan blinds minds "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4). Satan is well aware of

the power that resides within the words of the Holy Spirit to give off more than enough light to dispel the gloomy darkness of his domain. He knows that the words of the Spirit light the pathway to an eternal home with God in heaven. His mission is to keep people in darkness and thus, eternally lost. However, that mission has been thwarted by the providence of the three sources of light we have already discussed. God, Christ and the Spirit's words have made it possible for all to be called out of darkness into marvelous light.

## What Can We Do?

Continued From Page 3

sex crimes."5  
•Henry Boatwright, chair-man of the U.S. Advisory Board for Social Concern, was quoted in the **Dallas Morning News** as saying that "seventy percent of the pornography sold in this country ends up in the hands of

minors."6

•"From July, 1980 through February, 1984, the police/social work team of the Louisville-Jefferson County, Kentucky Exploited & Missing Children Unit prosecuted hundreds of adults for various crimes involving sexual exploitation of

children . . . At the time of arrest and/or service of search warrants, ALL of these adults predators were found with various forms of adult pornography and in most cases child pornography."7

3. PRAY. ". . . The effective prayer of a righteous man can

accomplish much" (James 5:16 NASV).

1. "Key Stats," **A Guide To What One Person Can Do About Pornography**, American Family Association, p. 15.

2. Ibid. 3. Ibid.

4. Josh McDowell, "Environmental Reasons," **Why**

**Wait?**, pp. 110-111.

5. "Key Stats," p. 15.

6. Robert Curry, "The Threat of Pornography," **Carolina Christian**, p. 11.

7. "Key Stats," p. 15.

•See other important statistics in last week's edition of the **North Bartow News**.

## What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

**Holger Neubauer**

Ask almost any person on the street today and inquire if he is a Christian, and almost always the reply will be, "Yes!" Even many members of the Lord's church seem to use the same criteria to determine who is a Christian and who is not. You see, so long as you believe in Jesus Christ, it matters not what you do or say or believe about what Jesus actually said. At least that is the way some members of the Lord's church seem to view Christianity.

The word Christian is used but three times in the New Testament, in each case it is applied to the followers of Christ. Jesus said himself, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46). Can you call yourself a Christian and care so little about Jesus and His church that you miss many of the church services that you could have easily attended? Can you call yourself a Christian and never even think about lost souls and what you

can do to try to help win them to Christ? Can you call yourself a Christian and give so little on the first day of the week that it required no sacrifice? Can you call yourself a Christian and not be able to sit down with someone and show him the plan of salvation from his holy word? Can you call yourself a Christian and sleep in worship services because you are so little interested in spiritual matters? Can you call yourself a Christian and yet let your

mind wander and play with children during the Lord's Supper? Can you call yourself a Christian and not do your best to please God? I think not, yet many people who claim to be Christians continue to practice the things mentioned here.

Being a Christian is following Christ. You must put on the new and put off the old (Romans 6:1-4). You must seek God and His kingdom, which is the church, first in your lives (Matthew 6:33-34). You must

live your life as to bring honor to Christ's name (Matthew 5:16). You must stand for right and fight against what is wrong (I Timothy 6:12). You must constantly try to learn more about God's word and try to share that knowledge with others (II Peter 3:18, II Timothy 2:2).

Are you a Christian? I wonder. Do you?

December 9, 1994

See Articles Inside:

- The Heavens Will Pass
- Shall We Gather  
At The River?
- "Lovest Thou Me?" No. 2
- Where Angels Fear  
To Tread!
- Dedicated To The Cause
- Position Open

Volume 31 Number 50  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words Of Truth

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

## Wisdom Described By The V

Blake Nicholas

One of the most vivid memories I have of my early childhood is of a day that I was going with my Father to cut timbers from the woods to use in adding stalls to the back of our barn. Daddy was preparing for the work, sharpening his tools on the back porch, and I was watching him. As he finished the axe he hung it over the rail and, turning to something else, said to me, "Don't touch it; it will cut you." I stood there looking at the shiny edge of the axe blade, and just couldn't believe that simply touching it would cut me. I made sure that no one was watching, and reaching up, quickly ran my finger down the edge of the blade. I felt a great sense of accomplishment, until the blood began to ooze from the cut on my finger.

I learned an important lesson that day in obedience. God's word stresses to children ". . . obey your parents . . ." (Ephesians 6:1), and there are many reasons why. I chose not to believe my Dad that day, not to obey, and I suffered because of it. But the lesson that I learned as a child is needed even more when we become adults.

In the Sermon On The Mount (Matthew 5-7) Jesus stressed the importance of our attitudes and the need to change our lives to conform to his teachings. He then concluded with the following words. "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 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 the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

In His closing remarks, Jesus encouraged the listeners to respond to His teachings with the proper attitude and actions, and illustrated true wisdom. Consider three principles that Jesus teaches with the examples of the wise and foolish men.

Those who are truly wise will build on the proper foundation. The initial and most important step in any building project is laying the foundation, and the same is true in living the Christian life. The New Testament describes the foundation of the Christian in several ways. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). Jesus said ". . . upon this foundation rock I will build my church . . ." (Matthew 16:18). The foundation He spoke of was the truth that Peter had just confessed, that He was the Son of God. In our text, the foundation of the Christian is described in still another way.

The proper foundation for the Christian is obedience to the teachings of Jesus. What an

important principle for Christians to grasp today. The Lord says that those who are truly wise will see that works are necessary for salvation. Hearing and doing must go hand in hand. In His teachings, Jesus always pointed to works, describing those who would follow Him as those who would have to take up their cross (Matthew 16:24), take His yoke upon them (Matthew 11:29), put their hands to the plow (Luke 9:62), and observe all that He commanded them (Matthew 28:20). I understand that we are saved by the grace of God through faith, and no one can be saved by their own works (Ephesians 2:8-9). I also understand that we cannot be saved without works, the works that God through his grace has ordained (Ephesians 2:10). Jesus affirms that obedience to His teachings are the essence of the foundation that his disciples must dig deeply to lay (Luke 6:47-48).

If action on our part were not necessary for salvation, then on the day of Pentecost, when asked ". . . what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), Peter would have responded, "Nothing!" When Paul asked Jesus on the road to Damascus, ". . . Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6a). Jesus wouldn't have said there were things Paul ". . . must do" (Acts 9:6b) if works were not required on our part; but they are. That's why Peter on the day of Pentecost exhorted them with many words, ". . . saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

A foundation of obedience

must be laid before one can be a true follower of Christ. Hebrews 5:12 - 6:2 voices the disappointment of God with those who are not maturing as Christians. It also outlines for us the foundation that the Christian should develop ". . . the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:1-2). Paul told Timothy to "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:17-19). The foundation of the wise is laid by doing the good works that Jesus taught.

Destruction awaits those who foolishly refuse to hear and do the teachings of Jesus. The New Testament clearly and consistently teaches that we will be judged by our works. Peter tells us that ". . . the Father . . . without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work . . ." (I Peter 1:17). As John prophesied, he ". . . saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of

the

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gs which were books, according to the books. And the sea and the dead which were in death and hell came out of the dead which were in death: and they were judged according to their works" (Revelation

19:1-6). Jesus, in addressing the seven churches in Asia said to each church, "I know thy works . . .," and either approved of them, or told them how to correct or improve them (Revelation 2-3). John further stated in Revelation 14:13, ". . . 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 after them." As a child, when I refused to hear and do what my Father said, I ended up cutting my finger. As an adult, when I refuse to hear and do what Jesus has said, the suffering and punishment will be eternal.

Our Saviour, filled with wisdom by the grace of God (Luke 2:40), with wisdom exceeding Solomon's (Luke 11:31), emphasized the importance of doing what he had commanded. True wisdom is evident in our lives when we submit to the will of God to walk in the works that he has ordained (Ephesians 2:10).

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

--63 Azalea Lane,  
Burnsville, NC 28714.

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## The Heavens Will Pass

Glenn Colley

A Christian woman recently called to ask, "What is meant by 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise' in II Peter 3:10?"

This truth is also in Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, and Luke 21:33 where Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

First, consider what it does NOT mean. It does not mean that the dwelling place of God is going to be destroyed. Colossians 3:1 says, "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

God is in heaven. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9).

God is eternal. He will have no end, therefore the heaven in which He dwells will have no end. Isaiah 57:15 speaks of God and His heaven when it says, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that

inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy . . ."

So, how can this be? On one hand we read that the heavens shall pass away, and on the other hand we read that heaven is eternal.

The answer is in the fact that there are three heavens in the Bible:

A. Paul said in II Corinthians 12:2, "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth; such a one caught up into the third heaven."

--There are three heavens. The third one is where God dwells.

B. The second heaven is the realm of the stars and moon and sun. Genesis 1:16, 17 says, "And God made two great lights. The greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth."

C. The first heaven is the realm just above the earth

where the birds fly. Matthew 6:26 (ASV) says, "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them . . ."

What heavens will pass away after the judgment day? The realms of the birds and the stars, and not the dwelling place of God.

Peter appealed to those faithful, suffering Christians in I Peter 1 to remain strong and courageous as Christians. With what did he make his appeal? How would they be rewarded for their patient faithfulness?

He understood that they were "in heaviness through manifold temptations," and that they faced "trials of their faith" (verse 6, 7). Here's the reward: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (I Peter 3:4)." May we all make heaven our goal and one day our home.

## Shall We Gather At The River?

Allen Webster

In the old days, the religious folk would gather down at the river after a revival to baptize those whom the Gospel had touched. We've gotten too sophisticated to baptize in a river today. The water's dirty. There might be snakes. Or toxic waste. Too much trouble. What would people say anyway? We've even outgrown baptism in some circles. Ancient rite. Quaint. Ridiculous. Unnecessary.

What about that? Shall we gather at the river? What is the purpose of baptism? Is it still necessary? What does

baptism do for a person anyway? God delivered His will once for all time (Jude 3). If any man changes it, the anathema of God rests upon him (Galatians 1:6-8; I Corinthians 16:22). The same problem exists (sin), the same punishment awaits (hell), the same reward is offered (heaven). Thus, the same conditions are enjoined. Let's look in God's book and see what it says about "gathering at the river" (cf. Acts 16:13-15). What has changed when a person comes out of that water?

BAPTISM CHANGES

YOUR RESERVATIONS. When planning a trip we make motel reservations to be assured a bed. If in a hurry, we make restaurant reservations to be assured a table. Similarly, we are all making reservations for eternity. You might say we choose either a "smoking" or a "non-smoking" section. There are two books of reservations: God has one, Satan the other. Every mature person is in one of these two books and no man is in both at the same time (Matthew 6:24).

Continued On Page 4

## "Lovest Thou Me?" No. 2

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

We now continue the study of a question thrice asked by our Lord in John 21:15-17 and which reads, "Lovest thou me?" Previously, I have suggested that this is a distinguishing and a remarkable question. Three more characteristics will be added now to the initial duct of declarations.

(3) IT IS A RIGHT QUESTION

It was asked by the very person who had the right to raise it and demand an answer of the same. It was directed to the right person. It was asked at the right time. It was asked with entirely right conditions prevailing. It was asked with the right motive in mind. It was asked to gain a right response from Simon Peter. The Lord always asked right questions, at the right time, for the right purposes, with right motives in mind and to gain right responses of those thus queried. In Matthew 16:13 it was right for Jesus to ask what the Palestinians were saying about His real identity and what the apostles thought relative to His real identity. In John 6:67 it was right for Jesus to ask of the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" In Luke 14:3 it was right for Jesus to ask of His enemies, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" In Luke 22:48 it was right for Jesus to ask of Judas Iscariot, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" In John 21:15-17 it was eminently right for Jesus to ask of Simon, "Lovest thou me?" Reader and writer alike have not always asked the right questions, of the right people, at the right time, with right conditions prevailing and for right responses to emerge. But EVERY question that fell from the lips of the Lord was pre-eminently right and NEVER wrong. Truly, this was a right

question.

(4) IT IS A REVEALING QUESTION

It was rightly designed to accomplish that very purpose. It was dynamically designed to reveal what Peter's real attitude was toward the Christ. It has the same basic character for us today. Tell me how you feel about Jesus and I know how you feel about creation, evolution, miracles, morality, inspiration, the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, its infallibility, its supreme authority and its all-sufficiency. Tell me how you feel about Jesus and I know how you feel about truth, real beauty, spiritual matters, the church, worship and going home to heaven in the sweet by and by. Tell me how you feel about Jesus and I know how you feel about God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Tell me how you feel about Jesus and I know how you feel about immorality, denominational dogmas that are filled with injurious error and all modernistic, liberalistic fallacies of our era. Tell me how you feel about Jesus and I know what the priorities of life are for you. Truly, this is a revealing question.

(5) IT IS A SEARCHING QUESTION

It was never designed to stay on the surface or on the external side of man. It is deeply designed to get on the inside of a man. It determines what his priorities are. It determines whether he is living for the Lord or for selfish purposes and pleasures. There is not a more penetrating question in all the Bible than this one. It is truly a searching question.

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



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# Where Angels Fear To Tread!

Gary Colley

For centuries Christians have assembled on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's supper. Christ instituted this memorial to His own memory for the minds of His disciples on the night of His betrayal, for them to keep to the end of the world (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20). Those who wish to be faithful and apostolic in practice will follow the Lord's command and follow the divinely led example of the first century church (Acts 20:7). This was to be taken "when ye come together in the church" or the assembly of the church for public worship (I Corinthians 11:18). No one can find any where in the text of the Bible where it was ever partaken of in any other place, or at any other time, except in the assembly of the church on the first day of the week. It has a specific purpose, which is stated in the Bible three times, that is it is to be done "in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:25). Jesus stipulated that all in this meeting were to partake together (Matthew 26:27). What could make this request in this sweet memory to our crucified Lord to be honored in our thinking any more readily than to know that it was made in the very shadow of the cross! It is to

be confined in all respects to these commands of our Lord since our salvation depends upon us remembering (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

## WARNING

We are even warned about taking of the supper in any other mode of mind than to discern the Lord's body and blood commemorated in the emblems. One is not to take in an unworthy, or improper manner, lest he eat and drink "damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (I Corinthians 11:29). Partaking of this memorial in a light, irreverent, flippant, or disorderly manner guarantees to incur the judgment of God on those who so act (I Corinthians 11:27-30).

## MAKE THE COMPARISON

The above is completely different from the Hallelujah pep rally type of religion some want to practice today! Recently there has come to our attention an article through the Abilene Christian University paper, the "Optimist" titled, "LATE-NIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE PROVIDES EXTRA OPPORTUNITY FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION." We are told that "students gather at the University Church of Christ on Sunday at 9 p.m. to commune with God and each other." This has been conducted evidently since

1991! One student is quoted as saying that "It's a time to take a spiritual deep breath." The fifty-five minute get-together is said to include "talking and sharing . . . spontaneous singing, prayer and scripture reading . . . The lights are dimmed . . . Around the room, unleavened bread and fruit of the vine rest on three tables . . . A single candle in the center of each table provides most of the light for the room . . . Whenever they choose, the students rise, walk to the table and partake in communion . . . Students may go alone or with friends . . . They may return to their seats, stand or kneel at the table or sit on the floor to partake. . . They can pray or talk with someone . . . Counselors and ELDERS (emphasis mine. GC) are available to speak with students as well" (Optimist, Sept. 7, 1994).

## WILL WORSHIP

What shades of Catholicism! With the lights dimmed, the candles burning, and three tables for convenience, what an out of the world experience! No cult has ever planned a better mediation "to expand the mind!" Surely the Lord just did not know how to plan "a really meaningful experience" packed with artificial reverence such as this! It

would seem to this reader of the article that it would be more in place with the duties of the "University Church of Christ campus minister and counselor at ACU . . . and ELDERS" (emphasis mine. GC), to practice what they are commanded in Titus 1:9, 13 - "holding fast the faithful word . . . rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith." They should be busy teaching these young people what the Bible actually says about the Lord's supper (I Timothy 2:2). Evidently, as it certainly appears, correct teaching is not being done, but rather the blind are leading the blind (Matthew 15:13-14). We do not know if all of the elders at "University Church of Christ" agree with these leisurely, untied, three-table with candle, happenings or not. But it is clear that Paul not only said to the Ephesian elders to "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," but he also warned "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" (Acts 20:28-29).

## STUDENT'S STATEMENTS

The article continues that a

"psychology major" of this gathered young number, since 1992, states, "It was a new experience for me . . . For many students, the service is a priceless time . . . a chance to forget about the last week and focus on the upcoming week" (NOT "REMEMBER" THE LORD!)(?)(GC)

## CAMPUS MINISTER'S STATEMENTS

Then comes the shades of Pentecostalism and Calvinism! Though the Holy Spirit never taught of any such "Extra Opportunity" as this, the "campus minister and counselor at ACU, said, 'Through song, Scripture, AND THROUGH GOD'S SENDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (emphasis mine, GC), we allow ourselves to be in the presence of God to be reminded of Jesus' sacrifice.' Brethren, beloved in the Lord, it is blasphemy to blame our faltering and blunders on the Holy Spirit! He further says, 'students need a specific time . . . to be together for worship . . . to search their hearts, for time for God to minister and to be refocused.' Of course, the 'late night communion service' provides the spooky things the services of the church cannot provide!

Continued On Page 4

## Dedicated To The Cause

Tracy L. Moore

Recently, at a collegiate football game, there was an elderly man attempting to crawl up the steps of the stadium on all fours. As he slowly moved up each step, he would very carefully maneuver his stadium seat to each level of his climb. He was dedicated to the cause. Fans sitting in the aisles watched with compassionate eyes, feeling sorry for the old man who was struggling to get to his seat. However, should we really feel sorry for this man?

As I pondered this story, I could not help but think about the apostle Paul. Here was a man who was truly, "dedicated to the cause." After Paul's conversion in Acts 9:18, he decided to

commit to the cause of Christ. In fact, verse 20 says, "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." However, his dedication did not come without some difficult steps to crawl over, or should we say walls to crawl over (9:24). First of all, Paul's own people with whom he had served for years, wanted to murder him for his new cause (9:23-25). Second, we see the disciples, the side to which he was devoted doubting and questioning Paul's dedication to Christ (9:26). Nevertheless, his dedication went past the thoughts and actions of men (Galatians 2:20). But, should we really feel sorry for Paul?

Many preachers and teachers,

(and I include myself), sometimes focus on the difficult times that Paul had in his dedication to the gospel, instead of his cause. However, when Paul was getting ready to die, he did not point out the grief he went through rather, he highlighted what he had accomplished. Paul wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (II Timothy 4:7). Before he went into Jerusalem, Agabus, a prophet that came down from Judaea, bound Paul's hands and feet with his girdle and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall

Continued On Page 4

## Position Open

Following the recent resignation of Joe Spivy from our work at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, we are currently seeking a man to fill our Associate Ministers (Youth/Education) position. Resumes are now being accepted for consideration.

They should be mailed to:

Attn.: Elders

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 Sixth Avenue

Jasper, AL 35501

# Shall We Gather At The River?

Continued From Page 2

The wicked are making reservations in hell. When men choose the path of sin, as all men do (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; I John 1:8), the devil writes their names in his book, because God blots them out of the book of life (Revelation 3:5; cf. Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Isaiah 59:1, 2). Satan puts his mark upon sinners (cf. this figure in Revelation 13:16). Those so marked end up drinking the wine of the wrath of God and "smoking" forever (Revelation 14:9-11). If we die without forgiveness from God we cannot be with God (John 8:21). Job explained "that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction . . . they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath" (21:30). "The Lord knoweth how to . . . to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9). Those who walk after the flesh, with eyes full of adultery, and follow after the way of Balaam are making reservations in the midst of darkness (II Peter 2:17). Jude says that the brazen false teachers who were troubling the church had reserved the blackness of darkness forever (v. 13). The fallen angels have reservations in hell, with chains and darkness (2:4; Jude 6). Even the earth has a reservation with fire (II Peter 3:7).

On the other hand, the righteous are making reservations in heaven. Peter spoke of " . . . an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4). Interestingly, reserved (tereo) here means "to guard from loss or injury . . .

by keeping the eye upon . . . to detain in custody . . . to withhold . . . fig. to keep unmarried; -- hold fast, keep" (Strong, 5083, p. 71). Thus God has made our reservations in heaven and He is guarding them against loss -- He won't misplace them! He is keeping His eye upon them. He has the "roll book" in custody, under lock and key. [Incidentally, the same word is used in II Peter 2:4, 9, 17; 3:7 above].

So, how do we change reservations? Since salvation comes only from God, we must ask "What does He require?" He told Peter to write (incidentally, in the same book): "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). The Lord Himself said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Thus, you could say, that God makes His reservations for heaven "down at the river bank!"

**BAPTISM CHANGES YOUR BANK STATEMENT.** Most of us know about debt. We owe bank notes on vehicles, boats, and furniture. We may owe thirty years on a house. We are reminded of our debts at the end of each month. Did you know that we are in debt to God? He won't send us a bill at the end of the month, but at the end of life (cf. Matthew 13:30, 40-42). We are all indebted to Him for using His world, eating His food, breathing His air. But further, and more seriously, we owe God for our sins. Jesus taught

His disciples to pray: ". . . forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). The word debts (opheilema) means "to be under obligation, be bound, be guilty" (Strong, 3783-4, p. 53). God owns us as servants by creation (Genesis 1:27) and as sons by redemption (Acts 20:28). As sinners, we rebelled against Him and ran up a terrible debt -- a debt we can never repay (cf. Matthew 18:24, 34, 35).

How can we be free of this debt? Peter explained to those who wanted to be forgiven that they needed to "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). He then explained the reason -- for the remission of sins. Remission is a financial term. It has to do with crediting a debt. In forgiveness, Jesus' blood remits the guilt of past sins and forwards a balance of zero (Matthew 26:28). The New Testament word "forgiveness" (apo, "from," and hiemi, "to send") literally means: "letting go; forgetting -- as though it never happened; loosing from a debt; to send away (as from a debt)." Thus, you could say that the bank God uses to forgive His debtors is the "river bank!"

**BAPTISM CHANGES YOUR CLOTHES.** While in sin, our souls are dressed in filthy rags (Zechariah 3:4). We have the smell of the pig pen on us (Luke 15:15). We are defiled (Jeremiah 2:23) and polluted (II Peter 2:20-22). Jude pictures the sinner as "a garment spotted by the flesh" (v. 23; cf. James 1:27). Those in Sardis had "defiled their garments" (only a few were white, Revelation 3:4). We need washing and cleansing.

How do you wash your soul's

clothes? In the river! "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Wash (apolouo) means "to wash fully, i.e. (fig.) have remitted. . . ." (Strong, 628, p. 14). Thus when one is baptized, he is washed and his sins are separated from him. The cleansing agent in the water is Christ's blood (Revelation 1:5). We are baptized into His death (Revelation 6:3, 4), and it was in death that His blood was shed (John 19:34). In baptism, Jesus' blood cleanses us from the filth of iniquity and makes us as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). So, you could say that the soul "changes clothes" down by the river.

**BAPTISM CHANGES YOUR RESIDENCE.** A sinner has traveled to the far country and taken up residence in a land God never visits (Luke 15:13). Like Adam and Eve, sinners have hidden from God's voice (Genesis 3:8) and as Cain, they have gone "out from the presence of the Lord . . ." (Genesis 4:16). Like Israel, they have removed themselves and stand afar off (Exodus 20:18). They are separated from God like smoke in a breeze and wax before a fire (cf. Psalm 68:2). God has turned His head; He has removed His hand (Isaiah 59:1, 2); He has cast them from Him (II Kings 13:23; 24:20; Psalm 51:11). On some He has even given up (Romans 1:24). "The Lord is far from the wicked . . ." (Proverbs 15:29). Paul pictures sinners as "afar off" (Ephesians 2:13), alienated, without hope and without God in the world (2:12).

How do sinners come home

from the far country? By fording the river of baptism! Notice carefully Paul's words: "For as many of you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). We change residence in baptism. We move "into" Christ and His church (Ephesians 1:22, 23). [The same idea is seen in Romans 6:3, 4; I Corinthians 12:13]. Salvation is only in Christ (Ephesians 1:3; II Timothy 2:10).

We need to gather at the river before we gather before God. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). Have you been to the river?

## Dedicated To The Cause

Continued From Page 3

deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21:11). Verse 12 then shows how the people tried to persuade him from going into the city. However, Paul did not want their pity. Rather, Paul answered them by saying, "what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). Paul was dedicated to the cause and had no use for the sympathy of man.

Many members and preachers often complain about how they are being treated by others, and I believe this is because many are not "dedicated to the cause." Men and brethren who have a true dedication are not interested in a pat on the back, but are looking to the good of the church.

Now, looking back to the man who crawled up the stadium to watch his favorite team, should we really feel sorry for him? No, because he was there to be a part of what he loved. He made sacrifices, but his pleasures outweighed any difficulties he encountered. In the same respect, should we really feel sorry for Paul? No, because his rewards outweighed his sacrifices. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

Are you "dedicated to the cause" or "downtrodden by the cause?"

--P.O. Box 964, Talladega, AL, 35160.

# Where Angels Fear To Tread!

Continued From Page 3

## WHY NOT HAVE AN "EXTRA GIVING SERVICE?"

Giving as commanded in the first day of the week worship, is conspicuously left out of this gathering! Wonder why? We have an example of the disciples meeting together to partake of the Lord's supper, which is as strong as a

command, but we have the inspired direct command from the Holy Spirit to give on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). A little "extra giving service" would cause reflection on the fact that everything belongs to God, and of which we are just the stewards. There might be three tables with a candle in the middle; turn the lights out

of course, so no one will know how much or how little one gives. After giving these could go back to sit on the floor or perhaps "kneel" for a while by the candle!

We have mentioned no names in this article, hence there is no personal attack intended. But the folly of placing the Lord's supper in this "playing church" mode to

prepare for college classes next week is completely out of harmony with the Bible which is the revealed will of God.

Let's go back to the Bible! And let us bring our young people up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

--7606 Hawkeye Dr., Austin, TX 78749.

December 16, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Begging Money From The Gentiles
- Calls From The Low Dungeon
- Position Open
- Would Jesus Compliment You?
- "Lovest Thou Me?"
- "Most Of A Minute"
- Bible Fools

Volume 30 Number 51  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of Truth and soberness." -- 2

1e

## The Gospel Preacher's Call

### Dennis Gulledge

It has been my privilege to preach the gospel of Christ now for a brief twenty years. In all that time I have never attended any of the fine preacher training schools operated by our brethren. I know that the men who graduate from some of these schools have been through intensive Bible study at the feet of excellent teachers. I do not know if their instruction includes a study of the Old Testament prophets. I do think it should because of the wonderful lessons to be learned about preaching by studying the works of the prophets, God's earlier spokesmen.

Every preacher must surely have a creed or a set of

fundamental beliefs which guide him in his work. Within what framework of principles does he operate? What drives him from day to day? Is it people pleasing? Is it a pay check? Is it some political agenda? Is it some vision of a three hour work week? Poor misguided soul!

Listen to this statement from the prophet Jeremiah: "As for me, I have not hastened from being a shepherd after thee; neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was before thy face" (Jer. 17:16, ASV). Please note three aspects of the prophets work that should likewise guide the gospel preacher of today:

1. He was constant in his work. The prophets work was not always pleasant. It subjected him to reproach, contempt and injury at the hands of the very people among whom he labored. Yet, Jeremiah said, "I have not hastened from being a shepherd after thee," ie., "I have not left off my work. I have not quit speaking out my truths." The Old Testament prophets worked among the people, but above all they worked for God. Those who are preaching the true word of God should not despair even though the success may not meet their expectations. Continue on! (Gal. 6:9).

2. He maintained his affection to the people to

whom he preached. Jeremiah preached wrath and destruction to a disobedient people. Though they were abusive to him, he was still compassionate to them: "neither have I desired the woeful day." He did not relish the reality of his prophecies which assured Judah of Babylons dominance and their own captivity due to their sins, but neither did he stop his mouth because of it. We should not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they should repent and live! Though we warn of the "woeful day" of the final judgment for the lost, we must not rejoice in their demise, but rather weep because of it.

3. He followed closely his

instructions. Though Jeremiah might have courted favor with the people, or at least avoided their displeasure (as some preachers do today), he did neither, but delivered his message faithfully; and that he had done so was a comfort to him: "thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was before thy face." The prophets words were in perfect accord with the divine revelation which he had received. Can the preacher of today say the same? Is he preaching "the word" (2Tim. 4:2)? Is he speaking as the oracles of God (1Pet. 4:11)?

## Bible Fools

### Johnny Ramsey

In the Scripture the use of the term fool refers to those guilty of moral folly. It is truly a serious matter to fall into the category of folk who turn their back upon God to follow their own evil manner of life. Shallow people who emphasize carnal values rather than eternal verities are foolish indeed. King Saul admitted that he had played the fool (1 Samuel 26:21) due to his envy toward David. Such emotions result in the rottenness of the soul (Proverbs 14:30). In Jude, verse eleven, we read of three men overwhelmed in iniquity

due to foolish decisions. Cain, who hated his own brother, allowed his jealousy to lead him to murder. Korah yearned for honor and prestige and persisted due to his shameful folly. Balaam ran toward ruin due to an inordinate desire for wealth that produced imbalance in life. Jesus clearly taught that those who build their hopes on mundane matters are destined to absolutely crumble into dust. Only those who courageously stand strong for truth and spiritual values will endure when storms of life are raging. It is one thing to be counted as

fools for the sake of Christ (1 Corinthians 4:10) by worldly people while altogether something different to be fools in the sight of God! In Luke 12 we read of a man whom the world would praise for successful business acumen but one whom the Savior called a fool for his wrong priority system.

Another well-known Bible fool is the one mentioned in Psalms 14:1 who declares there is no God. Those who praise the orderliness of the universe and the delicate balance of gravity, light, heat and tides that keep life upon our planet safe and secure,

surely know such precision rules out chance. It is absurd to believe in atheism and evolution but many pompous folk deny the obvious due to an arrogant bias based upon pseudo-intellectualism.

In Proverbs, in many passages, we read of foolish children who disobey parents and this results in chaos and rebellion and sorrow in the home. Many broken homes cry out for respect for authority in Gods earliest plan--marriage!

In I Timothy 6:6-10 we are made aware of the improper concern for riches on the part of many people who ought to

know better. Such results in many foolish and hurtful lusts that drown men in misery and destruction.

"Some build their hopes on the ever-drifting sands

Some on their fame, treasure or lands,

But mine is on the Rock that forever stands

Jesus--the Rock of Ages!

Job and Solomon realized the vanity of worldly possessions and so should we. A fool and his money soon shall part but the value of truth endures forever. Someone wisely said:

continued on page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Begging Money From The Gentiles

Glenn Colley

It is apparently becoming more accepted among the liberal brethren among us to push aside the long-held determination to never solicit funds for Christ's work from the general public. For many years our brethren have reasoned, "The Gospel is to be spread by Christians, not the world." In this reasoning, we have had another appeal that denominations usually didn't have. People who listened to our television and radio programs knew that we were interested in their souls, not their money. We had no other motivation than to save their souls. Occasionally a visitor would attend an assembly and contribute, but they weren't asked for their money.

But some would have us change. Even in Jasper now there is a radio program from our brethren which makes broad daily petitions to listeners for money. One brother said, "I don't have any problems with them asking for a little money now and then."

Is our practice to not solicit funds from non-members simply a human-based tradition, or does it reflect a Bible-based principle?

Consider III John verses 4-7:

"I have no greater joy

than to hear my children walk in truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church; whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for His names sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." (Emphasis mine, GC).

What's this? These God-approved missionaries are praised for their work, and were deserving of support from the Lords church. One reason they were deserving was because they resisted taking support from the Gentiles, or unbelievers. Why did John bother to mention this fact? Because it made the point that since commendable missionaries did not solicit money from non-Christians, the Christians should feel the need to bear the expense for their support. If the work of the preachers and teachers in the Lords church is faithful, Christians are to support the work with their money.

What do Christians do when the issue isn't money to support preaching, but to do another work of the church, like benevolence? Shouldn't they call on the compassionate spirit of the

unbelievers to contribute? In I Corinthians 16:1-3 Paul was concerned with needs "for the saints", (vs. 1). His instructions were to the Christians in Corinth (1:2), and were these:

"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, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."

We do not believe that these instructions to and about Christians are abstract coincidences. There is purpose and good reasoning backing the instructions regarding the money for the work of the church coming from Christians. First, it is good for the Christian doing the giving. The fact that he knows this is his responsibility builds Christian character. Second, it avoids the risk that some might level an accusation against our preachers that they are mercenaries, or simply preaching the kinds of sermons which will draw more money. Third, it follows a principle consistent throughout the Bible.

The church has no business trying to draw money out of those it is trying to save.-

## Calls From The Low Dungeon

Neal Pollard

All he said was what was true. For prophesying that Judah would be devastated by Babylon, Jeremiah was cast into the dungeon of the kings son (Jeremiah 38:1-6). He was suspended by cords which surely cut into his armpits. He soaked in unsanitary mire. He was left there to starve to death. Were it not for the compassionate heart of Ebedmelech, Jeremiah likely would have died.

The book of Lamentations, written by Jeremiah, is entirely filled with his sorrowful cries because of Gods punished people. According to the old Whedon's Commentary, the book can be seen as five, distinct mournful poems. Each poem reflects a different facet of the common sorrow [chapter one, the physical suffering of Judah; chapter two, God's scolding of Judah; chapter three, Jeremiah's spiritual suffering because of Judah's sins; chapter four, the spiritual suffering of Judah because of their sins; chapter five, Jeremiah's supplications for contrite Judah] (F.D. Hemenway., 454).

In Lamentations 3:55, the weeping prophet tells the Lord, "I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon." This image is identical to the words of the psalmist, who says in Psalm 88:6, "Thou hast laid me in the LOWEST PIT, in

darkness, in the deeps." David seems to complain that he has been placed there because of injustice and not because of his iniquity. Our minds are called back to Dothan, where jealous brothers cast Joseph into an empty pit. The sins of **Joseph's brothers** caused him to look up from his pit. However, no doubt or question arises about why Judah is in this figurative pit from which Jeremiah cries. Though Jeremiah has lived godly and has not merited suffering, he realized he stood among a nation of people who failed to obey Jehovah. Thus, from the low dungeon of despair, Jeremiah says several things.

"You Heard Me When I Cried" (Lamentations 3:56). From this statement we are made to see that **THE LORD RECOGNIZES HIS PEOPLE!** David knew this (Psalm 6:8; 18:3-6; 66:19), as he often exclaimed that "God hath heard me." Paul's inspired conviction of hope was "the Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19). To the Corinthian brethren, Paul said, "But if any man love God, the same is known of God" (1 Corinthians 8:3). In verse 56, Jeremiah finds comfort in calamitous times. He also makes an impassioned plea that God not turn away from His crying.

continued on page 4

## Position Open

Following the recent resignation of Joe Spivy from our work at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, we are currently seeking a man to fill our Associate Ministers (Youth/Education) position. Resumes are now being accepted for consideration.

They should be mailed to: Attn: Elders Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Al 35501.



## The Words Of Truth

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# Would Jesus Compliment You?

**W.A. Holley**

Jesus was a very honest and sincere person. He was unique in that He lived a sinless and perfect life. Jesus never apologized for a misspoken word or a sinful deed. "In Him is no sin." (I John 3:5). Even His enemies recognized His sterling character. Pilate said of Him, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matthew 27:24). Judas said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4).

Jesus never tried to gratify one's vanity with flattery. It is always right and proper to praise one who deserves acclaim, but it is always wrong to hypocritically compliment those who do not deserve no compliments.

Our Lord, while He lived among men, knew error in all its disgusting forms, but He never failed to rebuke the wrong and praise the right. We shall notice some examples where Jesus complimented for their virtues and noble deeds:

1. Jesus complimented Nathanael because he was a person without guile. Of him Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:45-47). What is "guile?" It is "a bait, snare, deceit" designed to entrap others. In Nathanael these traits of weakness in character were missing. Christians refuse to take advantage of others

through guile, flattery, or deceit.

2. Jesus complimented the Centurion for his great faith (Matthew 8:5-10). The Centurion was a Gentile who had built for the Jews a synagogue in Capernaum. He had a sick servant whom he wanted healed. The Centurion said to Jesus, "only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. Jesus could heal whether He was present or not. Jesus marvelled at the Centurion's faith. "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).

Remember, the less faith we have, the less we esteem Jesus, and the more faith we have, the less we esteem ourselves. Faith means no more or less than belief; and a man's faith is based upon Scriptural facts in the same manner and by the same processes that he believes any other facts. (Romans 10:17; Mark 16:15-16).

The faith that saves is the faith that obeys (James 2:17-26; Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-29).

3. Jesus complimented Peter because he made the Great Confession (Matthew 16:13-19). Peter had said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Jesus

replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:16-18). Hence, Jesus Christ built His church upon the great foundation truth that Jesus is the son of God--not upon Peter (I Corinthians 3:9-11). Verily, all the apostles were "stones" ON WHICH THE CHURCH WAS BUILT (Ephesians 2:19-22; Galatians 2:9-; I Peter 2:3-8). Matthew 18:18 shows that Peter and the other apostles had equal rights, each one of them becoming a living foundation stone as soon as his faith led him to make a like confession as was made by Peter.

All the apostles along with the apostle Paul claimed apostolic authority ( I Corinthians 12:28; 9:1-2; II Corinthians 12:12; 13:1-4; Galatians 1:1-8; Ephesians 3:1-6).

Thus, the church was not built upon Peter. "...thou art Peter (petros, a masculine noun), and upon this rock (petra, a feminine noun), I will build my church..." It is like saying, That is a fine baby boy, what is her name?

4. Jesus complimented the poor widow because of her liberality (Mark 12:41-44).

"And Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the multitudes were putting large sums in. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. And calling his disciples to him, He said to them, Truly, I say unto you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on!" (New American Standard Version).

Today, if the Lord sat next to you, when you make your Lords day contribution, would He compliment you?

5. Jesus complimented the woman in Simon's house because she offered no excuses, but did what she could. Read Mark 14:3-9. There were some who complained because they wanted the money spent otherwise, but the woman had used the ointment to anoint Jesus' head and feet. Jesus said, "She hath done what she could."

This woman's act became her memorial which continues to remind Bible readers even 2,000 years later of her concern and love for her Master. Had you lived in the days of Jesus you might have performed some special service for Him, personally; but since you live now, the only way

you can give to Christ is to support His church and its work (Matthew 25:31-46).

Arc we really doing what we can? Remember, ability plus opportunity equals responsibility (Matthew 25:14-30). Yes, greater abilities plus greater opportunities equals greater responsibilities.

We are commanded to take advantage of our opportunities (Galatians 6:10). Today is the day of all days (John 9:4). If a man can do no more, he can fill his place on a pew--- manifest the right attitude--- be warm and friendly--- generous with his time, money and talent. All acts of kindness, words of appreciation, gestures of sympathy, have their now, their Today; and to say, "When I have a more convenient season" to these great opportunities is to bid them depart from us.

"I did not know how short your day would be!  
I had you safe, and words could wait awhile---  
And yet...your eyes begged tenderness of me,  
Behind their smile.  
And now for you, so dark, so long, I speak, but on my knees, unheard alone---  
What words were these to make a short day bright---  
If I had known! Ah, love---  
If I had known! "

## "Lovest Thou Me?"

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

In John 21:15-17 our interrogating Lord raised the question, "Lovest thou me?", some three times and each time directed it to Simon Peter. For some five articles in Words of Truth I am taking note of some cardinal characteristics of this valiant, vital query. To date we have studied it as a distinguishing question, a remarkable question, a right question, a

revealing question and a searching question. I pick up with Number Six and continue with more attributes of this interesting, intriguing question.

**(6) It Is A Pivotal Question**

Jesus Christ is the one person who cannot be ignored; we cannot be neutral toward Him. Pontius Pilate tried this during the trial of Jesus before him but found no success therein. Toward

other personalities of the past we might act as though they never lived. But this cannot be with Jesus. We are either for or against Him as He taught in Matthew 12:30. Around Him the issues of life center. Statesmen, philosophers, kings, business magnets, professors, poets, etc., of past, present or future, are not pivotal. Jesus Christ is.

continued on page 4

### OJ Simpson And Forgotten Justice

**Glenn Colley**

**When the OJ Simpson case first broke, issues seemed to be pretty simple and matter-of-fact. We have two murdered people, and one suspect with substantial evidence against him, and who acts guilty. So, all that's left is to get a jury of peers and hold trial to examine evidence and decide. Right?**

**In this case you have to wonder if the first casualty of our justice system is justice itself. With all the swirling circus surrounding this case, justice seems to have taken a back seat, or maybe even left the theatre.**

**I want you to know that Christ doesn't work that way. One day, according to Matt. 25, He will hold court, and it will be perfectly fair. The call to this judgment will be quick, like the twinkling of an eye. No games, no tricks, no mis-trials. You and I will be judged with all other people according to whether or not we were faithful to God.**

# Bible Fools

continued from page 1

One advantage a poor man has is that he never leaves his car keys in his other pants.

One of the better-known verses on our subject of Bible fools is Proverbs 14:9....

Fools make a mock of sin...

Indeed, just as wicked men laughed Jesus to scorn (Mark 5:40) so do shallow folk

today count abomination a slight matter (Ezekiel 8:17) rather than a tragedy. Even in the church of our day we find members who flirt with error, wink at sin and laugh at preachers who still courageously renounce worldliness.

Matthew 25:3 tells us of the foolish virgins who most

unwisely were unprepared to meet the Lord. They represent myriads through the centuries who were wise in earthly pursuits but fools in the spiritual realm. The door will be forever shut to such derelicts toward the divine mandates that emanate from heaven (Matthew 14:21) When we realize the beauty

of salvation we are foolish to delay even a moment and persist in our disobedience to Jesus. An unknown poet challenges our attention:

If only I had found Jesus sooner, If the past I could only recall; But how thankful I am For the Blood of the Lamb And the fact that I found Him at all.

The love of the Lord that drove Him to the cross, on our behalf, ought to create a gracious response in our hearts. Truly, Christ bore it all that we might live in glory forevermore. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

## Calls From The Low Dungeon

continued from page 2

Because Jeremiah was a child of God, he was assured that God would, in some way, answer him.

"You Drew Near When I Called" (Lamentations 3:57). **THE LORD RESPONDS TO HIS PEOPLE!** Jeremiah recognized the "Shepherd aspect of the Lord. One can clearly envision the cradling Arms of the Almighty, scooping up His lambs injured by their own choices and giving them comfort in their repentance (cf. Psalm 23). James would teach us that God draws near to us if we draw near unto Him (James 4:8).

"You Have Pled The Causes Of My Soul" (Lamentations 3:58). Truly, **THE LORD**

**REPRESENTS HIS PEOPLE!** David prayed that God would plead his cause and deliver him (Psalm 119:154). The prophet Micah patiently waited for the representation of the Lord on his behalf. He said, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me" (Micah 7:9). He who, in the flesh, experienced humanity represents man before God as mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).

"You Have Redeemed My Life" (Lamentations 3:58). **THE LORD REDEEMS HIS PEOPLE!** A suffering Job rejoiced, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand upon the earth at

the latter day" (Job 19:25). Jeremiah, knowing the mercy of the Lord, confidently spoke of how God had preserved his life in times past. In a greater sense, Christ is the means of mankind's redemption from eternal damnation. That prolific passage, Titus 2:11-14, proclaims that God's saving grace has appeared to all men in the person of Christ, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Christ's incorruptible blood redeems the faithful obedient (cf. 1 Peter 1:18). Part of the enchanting song sung by the adorers of Christ includes the words "...thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and

nation" (Revelation 5:9).

"You Have Seen My Wrong" (Lamentations 3:59). Additionally, we learn that **THE LORD REPRIMANDS HIS PEOPLE!** God sees all that we do, though many think that God only sees the good we do. Others think that God only sees other people's wrongs, and still others think that God only sees non-Christians sins. God sees everything everyone does every instant everywhere and every time. How wonderful and reassuring this is to those who walk in the light. How fearful this is for those who walk in darkness. God, in His justice, will punish all whose wrongs are not covered by Christ's precious blood.

Obviously, God's people had sown iniquity. Jeremiah rebukes his brethren throughout the book of Jeremiah because of their idolatry, hypocrisy, failings in the home, materialism, and stubborn wills. Through the Babylonians, Judah reaped the captivity. But, as Jeremiah prophesied, Judah would not be captive forever (Jeremiah 30-35). God heard the cries of Jeremiah from the low dungeon of despair. Christians have the confidence that God will deliver them from the Pits of Persecution, the Dungeons of Despair, and the Cells of Sin. What hope!

## "Lovest Thou Me?" (No. 3)

He is the light of the world (John 9:5). He is the way, truth and life. Minus the Messiah there is no going, no knowing and no living. Loving Him is absolutely pivotal.

### (7) It Is A Priority Question

This is of close kin to the foregoing point. Love is the supreme emotion. It is greater than faith and hope as per 1 Corinthians 13:13. It is the bond of perfectness (Colossians 3:14). It climaxes the lovely list of Christian graces (2 Peter 1:5-7). It heads the list of the nine ingredients composing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23). It makes us kin to God (1 John 4:8,16). It is intimately linked with commandment keeping (John 14:15,21-24; 1 John 5:3). Man will never place things in proper perspective until he loves Jesus Christ and all linked with the Lord.

### (8) It Is An Individual Or Personal Question

Please note the use of the

singular pronoun of "thou." The question was addressed initially and primarily to Peter but also by implication to the other six present and to all of us as well. Not only does the pronoun make this crystal clear but the Lord singled out Simon by name and addressed the query to him each of the three times it was raised.

Simon Peter had a father whose name was Jonas (KJV) or John (ASV). He must have had a mother also although her name is not given anywhere in Holy Writ. Yet the Lord on this occasion did not ask Simon Peter if his parents loved the Christ. Simon Peter had a brother named Andrew (John 1:40-42). Yet the Lord did not ask, "Simon, what about Andrew? Does he love me? Simon Peter had a wife and a mother-in-law as per Mark 1:29-31 and 1 Corinthians 9:5. Yet the Lord did not say upon this occasion, "Simon, what about your wife and mother-in-law

whom I recently healed of her great fever? Do they both love me? Simon may have had one or more children at this time. We know that later he did for he declared himself an elder or bishop in 1 Peter 5:1 and according to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 an elder must be a father and have one or more believing or faithful children not accused or riot or unruly. Yet upon this occasion the Lord did not say, "Simon, what about your children? Do they love me?" Simon was not the only one present for this conversation. James and John were there. So was Thomas also known as Didymus. So was Nathanael of Cana in Galilee. So were two unnamed disciples (John 21:2). Yet on this occasion the Lord did not ask, "Simon, what about James, John, Thomas, Nathanael and others herein present? Do they love me?" The Lord made it personal and addressed it individually to Simon Peter.

Dear Reader Friends, this is exactly the application each of us should make to it--writer and reader alike. Truly, it is an individualistic query.

### (9) It Is A Co-Operative Question

Each time the Lord asked this question and Peter gave the answer, the Lord pronounced a work for him to do. It touched the feeding of His lambs or sheep, viz., His people either potentially or in actuality. As Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 3 one can plant, another can water but only the Lord gives the increase. If we love the Lord and are obeying His wonderful will, then we are in business with Him and with all others who also love Him and are honoring His holy wishes and divine commandments. Surely, we do not wish to commit the major mistake as did despondent Elijah who said he was left alone of all Gods people and his life was in constant jeopardy.

Heaven's God told him that 7,000 others had not yet bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:10-18). Everyone on earth who loves Jesus and is a kingly keeper of His holy will is our helper in the business hand. Jealously and envy relative to other laborers for the Lord are a shame and disgrace God for a surety. The founding father of Words of Truth, brother Gus Nichols, was as free of such as any man I ever knew. He took personal joy in every success that any soldier of the Lord experienced. When told of what another preacher or congregation was accomplishing, his customary response was, "That is wonderful." And he meant every syllable of that assessment!! Emulation in this is needed!!

Truly, this question is co-operative in its noble nature.  
P.O. Box 464  
Ripley, Tennessee 38063

December 23, 1994

**See Articles Inside:**

- Taking a Brother To Court
- Barsabas Was A Great Man, Too
- Are You Doing Your Duty?
- Position Open
- "Lovest Thou Me?" (No. 4)

Volume 31 Number 52  
(USPS 691-760)

# The Words of Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of truth and soberness."--Acts 26:24

11-12-1994

## "Be Not Conformed To This World"

Gary McDade

By the inspiration of God, the apostle Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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" (Roman 12:1,2).

**Conforming or compromising** is the tendency cautioned against in this text of the bible. Adherence to the Will of God insures against compromising with the present age. The subject to be declared or preached to God's people is

the Word of God. Again, Paul wrote, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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" (II Tim. 4:2,3).

The late brother Gus Nichols once astutely observed concerning compromise: "As far as the denominational world is concerned, our greatest danger, no doubt, lies in the temptation to compromise and become a sister denomination with the sects around us. People want to be like the crowd. It was this desire that led Israel to

demand a king (I Sam. 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 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 most powerful weapon. It is compromise.

The church does not belong to popular and influential preachers among us, who may at whim

introduce practices new to churches of Christ, which have usually been long since discarded by denominational churches in exchange for more costly and extravagant innovations. The church belongs to Christ (Mt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22,23). Accordingly, only those teachings and practices which are authorized within the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16) may be engaged in without "conforming to this present world." Not a few oppose this suggestion as is illustrated in the often-heard statement, "The Bible doesn't say we can't." Examples include: "The Bible doesn't say we can't applaud at a baptism or following an inspiring sermon;" "The Bible doesn't say we can't have a guitar

solo before worship;" "The Bible doesn't say we can't substitute a dramatic skit in the place of the sermon;" and "The Bible doesn't say we can't have special musical presentations like solos, choirs, and group singing in the worship." Yet, the Bible does say, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" simply means "by the authority of the Lord Jesus." Doing that which is not authorized by the Word of God is conformity or compromise with this present age.

## Some Thoughts On Ephesians 6:1-4

Mel Futrell

One of the very first passages of Scripture I put into memory as a pre-teen was Ephesians 6:1-4. Little did I realize way back then that this verse would hold just as much meaning and responsibility for me now as a parent as it did then for me as a child. When was the last time you considered it?

**"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."**

Between Ephesians 5:21 and 6:9, the great apostle offers a bit of family advice. He speaks to husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves. What he says is revealing to say the least. These four short verses (6:1-4), contain admonitions

concerning how children and parents are to BEHAVE themselves in their respective roles.

In the first verse one word jumps out at us; OBEY. Thayer's Greek Lexicon says of the word obey in Ephesians 6:1 it is "to hearken to a command, i.e. to obey, be obedient unto, submit to", page 638. Brethren, at times I wonder if the word obey is still in the vocabulary of boys, girls, men, and women. If there were ever a relationship where obedience should be stressed, surely it is the one of parent and child. Yet,

today it's not uncommon to encounter families where it appears the roles are reversed as children run roughshod over their parents. One should note that the phrase 'in the Lord', "is best connected with obey rather than with parents" (Turnbull, Proclaiming The New Testament, 1964, p. 187). Thus what is being emphasized is the divine duty of children to obey, and not that one's parents must be Christians before one is required to obey them. The Bible commentator, Matthew Henry, said long ago that, "It is the order of nature that

parents command and children obey". Any reversal in this "order of nature" will result in rebellion to the established rule of GOD, and that's no laughing matter. It is not by chance that verse one ends with, "FOR THIS IS RIGHT".

The apostle in verse two makes reference to Exodus 20:12, which states the fifth of the ten commandments under the law of Moses. No doubt one needs to view obedience as springing from

continued on page 4

# From The Editor

Glenn Colley

## Taking A Brother To Court

Glenn Colley

In I Corinthians 6:1 Paul began the discourse on law suits between brethren with the word "Dare" "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" The text is not addressing the use of attorneys to draw up agreements using non-Christian lawyers, or those kinds of settings, but rather the subject of brethren going before a judge because they have a matter which they presumably cannot settle. Paul says, "against another...".

The word dare, or it's obvious usage, "How dare you", is the beginning note in this stanza condemning what was apparently a practice in Corinth. Incidentally, the Greek word for dare is tokos, and is often translated "durst". "...no man after that durst ask him...(Matt. 12:34)." "...Moses trembled, and durst not behold...(Acts 7:32)." It means according to Thayer, "Not to dread or shun through fear."

Paul was shocked that these Christians would even consider taking a fellow Christian before the unbelieving court to settle disputes between them. He argues that Christians have a higher wisdom, a godly wisdom, which the world has rejected. The very essence of Christianity portrays a lifestyle which keeps calmness in the heart regarding the things of life. How then could Christians ask them to judge in these matters?

"Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge the angels?"

Taking a brother to court was a serious mistake. Paul pointedly said, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take the

wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren."

For some in the past, faced with disagreements with brethren, this passage has become a sort of foe. "How can I " get around" this pointed teaching and take my brother to court?" To make matters worse for these troubled brethren searching for a loop-hole, Paul adds that we should rather take the wrong. Don't underestimate how large that "wrong" can become. It is often the case that brethren engage in high-dollar, legitimate business dealings as friends, one trusting how the other will act in any setting, only to later be disappointed. Note however, that Paul paints this teaching with a broad brush. His words would prohibit a lawsuit between two Christians which was over fifty thousand dollars as well as it would over fifty.

Occasionally churches have disputes with their preachers which sadly escalate to the need for outside help to settle them. This of course not only occurs in the Lord's church but also in the denominational churches. According to a recent Associated Press story, "Legal scholars say that while most judges prefer to stay out of disputes between congregants, it is becoming more common for spiritual matters to be resolved by lawyers. In Mobile alone, two church-related cases recently have been filed: --A member of Stone Street Baptist Church filed suit in June seeking to have the pastor removed. A judge ruled this month in the pastor's favor, dismissing the case before it went to trial.

--Trustees and national officials of the church of God of Prophecy denomination filed suit last month claiming they fired a pastor at a Grand Bay congregation still want him.

Experts say lawsuits involving churches most commonly deal with control of

a congregation, particularly when one segment wants a pastor to leave." The article concluded by saying, "It turns out many cases are left up to a judge's discretion. Judges hate these cases."

Perhaps it should also be noted that the one in violation of Paul's teaching is the one who takes the other to court. Certainly there are cases in which one party seeks to settle a dispute in a Christian fashion outside of court, and is making every effort to do what is right, but is summoned to court by the other party and the civil authorities against his will. According to the inspired apostle, he should offer an agreement which amounts to him being defrauded, and try to avoid the court. Jesus taught us an alternative to Christians taking one another to the unbelievers court:

"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 to the church; let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican, (Matt. 18:15-17)."

Without question Paul meant what he said in I Corinthians 6. It's wrong for Christians to settle the disputes between themselves in a court of non-believers. We must avoid the situation, even if we suffer being defrauded in the process.

## Barsabas Was A Great Man, Too

Neal Pollard

Having fallen from grace, Judas soon thereafter fell headlong a corpse and a reminder of the depths to which sin will take an individual (cf. Acts 1:17-20). Though he had a part in the ministry of God the Son, he chose a commission as henchman in the army of perdition.

His death, as apostle, left a vacancy in the overseership of the handpicked, special followers of Jesus (cf. Acts 1:20). By divine guidance (Acts 1:24, 26), the apostles chose a man among men to pick up the armor vacated by the deserter. The man chosen, Matthias, was a great man. This is obvious, for his appointment was based upon his spiritual character (cf. Acts 1:21). However, what of the man Barsabas, about whom very little is spoken? Was he not also a great man?

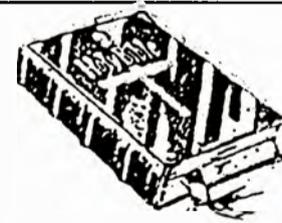
HE WAS FAITHFUL TO CHRIST (Acts 1:22). Swete explains faithfulness to Christ (as in Revelation 2:10) as proving "...thyself loyal and true, to the extent of being ready to die [for Christ's sake]" (The Apocalypse of St. John). The word faithful suggests reliability and trustworthiness, as well as submissiveness. All of this describes Barsabas. From the ministry of The Baptizer to the ascension of The Savior, Barsabas was numbered among the disciples. Apparently, he withstood even the difficult teaching of Christ (see John 6:66-69). He did not turn away, even after the seeming defeat of

Calvary (Acts 1:22). Faithfulness is, in God's eyes, a sign of greatness.

HE WAS RECOGNIZED AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER (cf. Acts 1:23). This is very subjective. The author sees the appointment of Barsabas as the result of his spiritual excellence among the "company". Assuming that, Barsabas would appear to have been perceived as a leader. Truly, fervent humble, and obedient discipleship sets one apart (1 Peter 2:5-9) as salt (Matthew 5:13) and light (Matthew 5:14) in this world.

HE WAS WILLING (cf. Acts 1:22-23). Apparently, from the text, Barsabas did not shrink the call to duty. No excuses could have been uttered, for the apostles were left to "give forth their lots" (see McGarvey's Original Commentary On Acts, 22) to pick Judas' successor. How seemingly rare to find men both qualified and eager to serve, men of Isaiah's stripe who cry, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Willingness precedes work, and Barsabas appeared ready to "take part in this ministry and apostleship" (Acts 1:25a).

Faith, works, and attitude all add up to greatness in God's eyes, even if not in men's blinded vision. Though not God's choice to fill the shoes of an apostle, Barsabas was distinguished as His servant. How wonderful one day it will be to walk with Barsabas on the street of gold and thank him for his example of greatness in service to our Eternal King!



### The Words Of Truth

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# Are You Doing Your Duty?

**W.A. Holley**

Solomon the King, recognized the importance of appointing certain ones to perform various tasks "...as the duty of every day required" (II Chronicles 8:14, ASV).

All duty is to enhance the glory of God. We read, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31, ASV). Hence, one cannot commit sin to the glory of God.

Jesus, your Savior, and mine, said, "Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty; we do not expect special praise for doing our duty.

Duty implies obligation. Such is the constitution of the human mind that no sooner do we perceive a given course to be right than we recognize also a certain obligation resting on us to pursue that course.

Duties can be classified according to one's particular relationships. We shall name some of these relationships which involve our duties---

1. You have a duty to yourself. Are you true to yourself? Are you doing the

very best you can? Could you do better if you really wanted to? Do you practice acts and habits that really destroy yourself? Drunkenness, adultery, stealing, drug addiction, et al, contribute to one's self-destruction. The "thou shalt nots" of the Holy Writ were reissued for man's good (Exodus 20:1 ff; Romans 13:9-11).

2. You have a duty to your family. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:6-7). Whether we wish to admit it or not, the family is the great foundation of all human society. Today the family structure is being undermined by godless and humanistic forces. Just look at the thousands and thousands of children who have never had a father or a mother. What is the result? Drive-by shootings, robbery, murder, babies having babies, outlaws, all in the fullest sense of the word. Parents, it is time for you to get back to the basics. (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15-17; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21).

Children are to be desired and are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of

the Lord. (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4). For example, Jesus was brought up to be a carpenter; Paul to be a tent maker (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Acts 18:3). Idleness is a great curse to children who are allowed to have nothing to do. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

3. You have a duty to your nation. "Be subject to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king". (I Peter 3:13-17, ASV).

The quickest way to destroy your nation is to destroy the people's confidence in their leaders. Crime, like cancer, is rapidly eating away our moral fiber. God is ruled out, anything, goes--nothing is wrong anymore. This same tone was set in the days of Judges. Hear the word of God: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25; Deuteronomy 12:8). The "Talk Shows" bear witness to what we have said. For

shame!! Somehow absolute authority in the minds of many does not exist anymore! (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17). Today God rules and reigns through his word (Romans 1:16; Acts 2:36-38, 47).

(4) You have a duty to the local Church of Christ where you assemble each Lord's day (Romans 16:16; Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 20:7; 2:36-38, 42, 47). There is New Testament example (I Timothy 4:12; I Peter 2:21). New Testament Christians met upon the First day of the week (Acts 20:7), gave of their earnings (I Corinthians 16:1-2; ate the Lord's supper, (Acts 2:42); sang songs that taught and admonished each other in the right way of the Lord (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13); read and studied the word of God (Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:37); and prayed (Acts 2:42; I Timothy 2:1; I Peter 3:7, 12; Revelation 5:8). These are the five items of Scriptural Worship.

Brethren, if you do not lend the church your moral support in your community, who will?

(5) Your neighbor must be included in your duty toward God Almighty. We must love our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:28-33).

You have an obligation to your neighbor: Set the finest example of conduct toward him and teach him the truth of God (II Timothy 2:2). Begin where you are: On the job, across the street, in the doctor's office, et al.

Perhaps you will say, "I don't know enough Bible to teach my friend." Do you know what you did to become a Christian? If you know this much, you know enough to teach your friend. Open your Bible, find Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38. Memorize these passages and teach them to your friend.

Would you want to go to the Great Judgment with the blood of your friend on your hands? Paul said, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

To have a clean hand and a pure heart, you must do your duty before God (Job 9:30; 17:9; Psalm 24:4). These words are written for those who wish to be prepared to meet God (Amos 4:12).

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## "Lovest Thou Me?" (No. 4)

**Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**

I now continue with you, my dear readers, a short series of articles dealing with a penetrating query our Lord directed initially to Simon Peter in John 21:15-17. He raised it thrice and Peter responded an equal number of times. Previously, I have labeled it a distinguishing question, a remarkable question, a right question, a revealing question, a searching question, an individualistic question, a co-operative question, a pivotal question and a priority question. Three more will be added in a this current article.

(10) It Is A Brief Question

Its beautiful brevity enhances its attractive nature to every reader of it. Three words compose it. Through the years I

have conducted countless Open Forums and Question and Answer periods and have answered thousands of Bible related questions or queries. Very frequently, the questions asked will be so long and detailed that I almost forget the first part by the time the last part is set forth! Jesus asked many questions in His personal ministry and, just like this one, almost all of them are noted for their brevity. Each word should count in an answer for a surety but each word should count in a query also. We could all learn much from the Lord about asking questions of a religious nature!

(11) It Is An Evangelistic Question

Please observe that each time the Lord raised this query and Peter responded to it that Jesus

told him something to do. This is NOT a grace-only question with all obligation in Deity's corner and none in humanity's corner. Commandment-keeping does not negate grace; it compliments it and gives it the energetic link. The first time Jesus told Peter to "Feed my lambs." The next two times He instructed Simon to "Feed my sheep." This is meant to supply them the diet of sound doctrine they needed as young Christians (lambs) and as veteran Christians (the sheep).

Simon spent the remnant of his life in executing this command. Each time he addressed alien sinners, such as in Acts 2, 3, 4 and 10, he was speaking to those who were potentially the Lord's lambs or sheep. When he talked/wrote to Christians as he continued on page 4

## Position Open

Following the recent resignation of Joe Spivy from our work at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, we are currently seeking a man to fill our Associate Ministers (Youth/Education) position. Resumes are now being accepted for consideration. They should be mailed to:

Attn: Elders

Sixth Avenue Church of Christ

1501 Sixth Avenue

Jasper, Alabama 35501

# Some Thoughts On Ephesians 6:1-4

continued from page 1  
honor of one's parents which is the divine mandate. In verse three a promise is connected to the imperatives of verses one and two which deserves consideration by us all.

With verse four, the behavior of fathers is highlighted. Might there be some significance here to the

fact that mothers are not mentioned, yet fathers are? Might not dads bear a greater responsibility in parenting than many have before imagined? Yes, I believe so. Yet I would be quick to add that although moms are not mentioned here the responsibility of parenting extends in both directions. The sin of many fathers may

very well be in their ignorance of or refusal to comply with Ephesians 6:4. Our children are a part of us, thus the instruction of verse four is so much the more important. Fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture ("paideia"-general education and culture) and admonition ("nouthesia"-correction, see also 2

Timothy 3:16) of the Lord. It would be my studied judgment that what is commanded here most certainly involves religious education. The statement "provoke not you children to wrath" appears to be the flip-side of "children obey your parents".

Brethren, there are only two ways a man can build up his

family; by adding to it and/or by strengthening those who are in it. The latter is the subject of verse four. And the whole of Ephesians 6:1-4 is a matter of stern importance.

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## "Lovest Thou Me?" (No. 4)

continued from page 3  
did in acts 8, 9, 12 and in his two epistles he was feeding those who already were the Lord's sheep. He was edifying them or building them up in the faith most holy. He did this in order to enable the saints of God to grow (1Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18). The work of the church and the execution of the Great Commission largely grow out of this question in every generation--Peter's and ours as well! Does anyone really think that men would take the message of life and redemption in Christ to a wayward, wrecked race of

men unless they loved the Lord Jesus Christ? The church of the first century took his word to the four corners of the earth as we learn from Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:23. Twentieth century Christians have not done this in our time. Can it not be traced to the sad fact that there has been a waning of love in our hearts for the Lord Jesus Christ? Truly, the question addressed to Simon Peter initially and to all of us ultimately is evangelistic in its noble nature. Let there be no mistake in this essential area.

(12) It Is A Problem-Solving

Question.

It would solve the twin problems of liberalism and modernism. Both of these touch the Deity of Christ, the inspiration and authority of the Bible and its all-sufficiency. Those who love Jesus will accept His Deity and the fundamental facts of Biblical inspiration, authority and all-sufficiency minus debate, quarrel or quibbling. It would solve the problem of worldliness that John spoke of in 1 John 2:15-17 and that James depicts in James 4:4. People are worldly because of a failure to love Jesus Christ and His religion that puts the

OTHER world ahead of this one. It would solve the problems of drinking, other drugs, illicit sex and violence in our day. Drinking and drugs do not mix with Deity; irresponsible sex does not mix with Christ, the Prince of Purity and the Height of Holiness. Violence is not compatible at all with Christ's Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31. It would solve the problems of marred marriages and bad relationships between parents and children. Homes fall because there is no love for the Lord and His Cause. It would solve the problem of

apathy and lukewarmness. It would solve the problem of church and worship absenteeism. It would solve the problems, so acute in nature, of those determined to transition and change the Lord's unchangeable kingdom. It would solve the problem of those who deny the Lord has a pattern. To love Jesus is to love the divine pattern He gave and keep it intact minus change or corruption. Surely, this is a problem-solving question.

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## "What About David?"

### Mike Benson

Dear Mr. Benson,

"Since David used instrumental music to praise God, isn't that sufficient authority for our doing so today?"

Your question is one which has been considered by many people. Let us examine it in light of what the Bible has to say.

1. David lived and worshiped under the authority of the Mosaic Law. He lived under a law that demanded circumcision as a religious rite, the keeping of the sabbath day, the officiation of the Levitical priesthood, the playing of instruments during worship, the offering of animal sacrifices, the burning of incense, and a whole host of other religious practices. God authorized all of these practices . . . but for

WHEN? Only in the worship of the Old Testament under the Mosaic Law. See Hebrews 9.

Even John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church, realized and taught that the Old Testament is not our source of authority for New Testament worship. "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning shadows of the law." (Calvin's Commentary on the Twenty-Third Psalm).

2. Christians today are not under the authority or direction of the Old Testament. "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, (so as to create) in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:15). "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).

3. The only authority we have on the question of church music is Christ. ". . . All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, (giving) thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). Since Christ is the sole authority in matters of religion,

anything He or His apostles authorize in worship we must use. Anything without His sanction we must exclude from our worship.

Below you will find a list of all that Christ prescribes concerning music in New Testament worship. Read these passages candidly and prayerfully:

Matthew 26:30 - "sung a hymn" Acts 16:25 - "praying and singing hymns" Romans 15:9 - "sing unto they name" 1 Corinthians 14:15 - "singing in spirit and understanding" Ephesians 5:19 - "speaking, singing" Colossians 3:16 - "teaching, admonishing, singing" Hebrews 2:12 - "sing thy praise" James 5:13- "sing praise"

We are not to use mechanical instruments of music in worship because

we are to hear Christ, not David. David had eight wives, danced in worship, did not observe the Lord's Supper, and did not pray in the name of Jesus-yet he was living up to the demands of the law of Moses in so doing. However, if we try to take him as an example in worship by bringing in instruments of music and other shadows of the law, we are hearing Moses, not Christ; and in so doing we will be severed from Christ and ultimately lost. "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

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